

Exploring Pupils' Experiences of a Transition Project using Interpretative
Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Kate Mathews

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

May 2012

Student Declaration

University of East London

School of Psychology

Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted for any degree and it is not being concurrently submitted for any degree.

This research is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

This thesis is the result of my own work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references in the text. A full reference list is appended.

I hereby give my permission for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loans, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Name (please print) ..KATE MATHEWS.....

Signature: Date:

Abstract

In the UK children make the transition from primary to secondary school when they are 11 years old. The majority of pupils adjust well to their new secondary school. However, there is a minority of vulnerable pupils for whom transition is a challenging time. These children are more likely to experience negative educational outcomes during their first year in secondary school (Year 7). Therefore it is of the upmost importance to support these vulnerable children through transition.

The experiences of six vulnerable Year 7 pupils were explored in this research. The pupils' experiences of transition and of a Transition Project they had previously participated in whilst in their final year of primary school (Year 6) were examined. The data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews. The research adopted an interpretative phenomenological perspective to explore the participants' experiences. The data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings of this research stress the importance of listening to children's views. The main themes that emerged from the data included, 'Struggling to Cope', 'The Importance of Friendship', 'Feeling out of Control' and 'Feeling Ready for Secondary School'. A rich description of the pupils' experiences of transition and of a Transition Project is presented. This research has demonstrated that interviewing vulnerable children can yield rich and valuable data. It has also highlighted that children wish to have their views listened to and want to participate in research.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the six participants who so kindly donated their time and shared their experiences for this research.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Mark Turner, for all his support, advice and guidance in the development of the doctoral research.

My thanks to my colleagues for their support.

Last and by no means least, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continuing support, love and encouragement throughout my three years of training. I know I would have never got to where I am today without their support.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Table of Contents.....	5
List of Appendices.....	9
List of Tables.....	10
List of Figures.....	10
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	11
1. Chapter Overview.....	11
1.1 Terminology: Transition and Vulnerable Children.....	11
1.1.1 Definition of Transition.....	11
1.1.2 Definition of Vulnerable Children.....	12
1.2 The Importance of a Successful Transition.....	14
1.3 Transition in National Priorities and Educational Policy.....	15
1.4 The Importance of Listening to Children.....	19
1.5 Introduction to the Transition Project.....	21
1.6 Personal Reflexivity.....	22
1.6.1 Personal Position.....	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	26
2. Chapter Overview.....	26
2.1 Literature Strategy.....	26
2.2 Role of School.....	27
2.3 Developments in Research regarding Transition.....	28
2.4 Changes associated with Transition.....	29
2.5 Impact of Transition.....	30
2.5.1 Impact on Attainment.....	30
2.5.2 Impact on Self Concept and Emotional Well-being.....	32
2.5.3 Impact on Social Adjustment.....	34
2.6 Vulnerable Pupils and Transition.....	35

2.6.1 Characteristics of Vulnerable Pupils.....	35
2.7 The Importance of Listening to Vulnerable Children.....	38
2.7.1 Listening to the Views of Vulnerable Children.....	38
2.8 Coping and Resilience.....	39
2.9 Psychological Models of Transition.....	42
2.9.1 Model of Personal Change.....	42
2.10 Systematic Literature Review Exploring Pupils' Experiences of Transition.....	45
2.11 Support for Children through Transition.....	52
2.12 Systematic Literature Review Exploring Children's Experiences Of Transition Support.....	53
2.13 Lack of Research Exploring Vulnerable Pupils' Experiences.....	57
2.14 Current Research.....	58
2.14.1 Research Aims.....	58
2.14.2 Research Questions.....	59
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	60
3. Chapter Overview.....	60
3.1 Purpose of Research.....	61
3.2 Research Design.....	61
3.2.1 Qualitative Methodology.....	61
3.2.2 Rationale for using IPA.....	62
3.3 Overview of IPA Methodology.....	63
3.4 Philosophical Underpinning of the Current Research.....	66
3.4.1 Epistemological Position.....	67
3.4.2 Ontological Position.....	68
3.5 Participants.....	69
3.5.1 Sampling.....	69
3.5.2 Inclusion Criteria.....	69
3.5.3 Recruitment Process.....	70

3.5.4 Sample Size.....	71
3.5.5 Participant Details.....	72
3.5.6 Participant Activities within the Transition Project.....	73
3.5.7 Researcher's Involvement with each Participant.....	75
3.6 Data Collection.....	76
3.6.1 Research Time Line.....	76
3.6.2 Interviews.....	77
3.6.3 Semi-Structured Interview Schedule.....	78
3.6.4 Interviewing Children.....	81
3.6.5 Visual Aids.....	81
3.6.6 Transcription.....	82
3.7 Data Analysis.....	82
3.7.1 Conducting IPA – The Analytic Procedure.....	82
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	85
3.8.1 Consent.....	86
3.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity.....	87
3.8.3 Power.....	88
3.8.4 Potential for Harm.....	89
3.9 Quality, Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness.....	90
3.9.1 Research Bias.....	93
3.10 Reflexivity.....	94
Chapter 4: Findings.....	96
4. Chapter Overview.....	96
4.1 Group Analysis.....	97
4.1.1 RQ1: Theme 1 – Struggling to Cope.....	97
4.1.2 RQ1: Theme 2 – New Beginnings.....	99
4.1.3 RQ2: Theme 1 – The Pendulum Swings: Accepting Support.	101
4.2 Individual Analysis.....	104
4.3 Participant 1 – Ollie.....	104

4.3.1 RQ1: Theme 1 – Struggling to Cope.....	104
4.3.2 RQ1: Theme 2 – Feelings of Liberation.....	107
4.3.3 RQ2: Theme 1 – ‘I could cross off some of my list of worries’.	109
4.4 Participant 2 – Sarah.....	111
4.4.1 RQ1: Theme 1 – Experiences of Loss and Anger.....	112
4.4.2 RQ1: Theme 2 – Sense of Fear.....	114
4.4.3 RQ2: Theme 1 – Initial Sense of Fear.....	116
4.4.4 RQ2: Theme 2 – Sense of Relief.....	118
4.4.5 RQ2: Theme 3 – Developing Confidence and Building Self-Esteem.....	119
4.5 Participant 3 – Mandy.....	120
4.5.1 RQ1: Theme 1 - Multiple Identities.....	121
4.5.2 RQ1: Theme 2 - The Journey of Revelation.....	124
4.5.3 RQ2: Theme 1 - Being Out of Control.....	126
4.6 Participant 4 – Lizzie	127
4.6.1 RQ1: Theme 1 - Clinging to the Past.....	128
4.6.2 RQ1: Theme 2 - Struggling to adjust to Secondary School.....	130
4.6.3 RQ2: Theme 1 - Attachment to the Transition Project.....	132
4.7 Participant 5 – Jackson.....	134
4.7.1 RQ1: Theme 1 – Sense of Pessimism.....	134
4.7.2 RQ1: Theme 2 – A Sense of Bravado.....	137
4.7.3 RQ2: Theme – Sense of Anger.....	139
4.8 Participant 6 –Ryan.....	141
4.8.1 RQ1: Theme 1 – The Great Escape from Primary School.....	142
4.8.2 RQ1: Theme 2 – The Euphoria of Secondary School.....	143
4.8.3 RQ2: Theme 1 – A Sense of Uncertainty.....	145
4.9 Summary of Key Findings.....	146
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	148
5. Chapter Overview.....	148

5.1 Commentary on Key Findings in relation to Previous Research.....	148
5.1.1 Transition Project: Out of the Participants' Control.....	148
5.1.2 Transition Project Evokes a Sense of Readiness.....	150
5.1.3 Preparing for Transition: Open/Induction Day Experiences....	150
5.1.4 Transition is Anxiety Provoking.....	151
5.1.5 'Vulnerable Pupils' in relation to Previous Literature.....	152
5.2 Critical Analysis of the Research and Implications for Future Research.....	154
5.2.1 Strengths of the Research.....	154
5.2.2 Limitations of the Research.....	156
5.3 Implications of Research for Educational Practice.....	159
5.4 Dissemination of Findings.....	162
5.5 Impact of the Research on the Transition Project.....	163
5.6 Implications for Educational Psychologists.....	165
5.6.1 Importance of Informed Consent.....	165
5.6.2 Supporting Vulnerable Pupils through Transition.....	166
5.7 Reflections on the Research Process.....	167
5.8 Conclusion.....	170
References.....	174
Appendices.....	189
Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet.....	189
Appendix 2: Consent Form for Participants.....	192
Appendix 3: Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians.....	195
Appendix 4: Consent Form for Parents/Guardians.....	197
Appendix 5: Ethical Approval.....	198
Appendix 6: Further Information about the Transition Project.....	199
Appendix 7: Visual Aids used during Interviews.....	208
Appendix 8: Transcript from Participant 1 – Ollie.....	211
Appendix 9: Clustering of Themes.....	229

Appendix 10: Extract of Analysed Transcription.....	233
Appendix 11: Extract of Emerging Themes and Sub-themes.....	235
Appendix 12: Cross-case Analysis – Themes and Sub-themes.....	237
Appendix 13: Extracts from Reflective Journal.....	241
Appendix 14: Leaflet of Resources.....	243
Appendix 15: Interview Schedule.....	244

List of Tables

Table 2.10: Details of Studies obtained from a Systematic Literature Search.....	46
Table 3.5: Participant's Demographic Details.....	73
Table 3.5.1: Activities undertaken in Transition Project.....	74
Table 3.5.2: The Nature of the Research Involvement with each Participant.....	75
Table 3.6: Time-Line of Data Collection.....	76

List of Figures

Fig. 3.6: Diagram of Interview Schedule.....	79
--	----

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1. Chapter Overview

The primary to secondary school transition occurs in the UK when children are 11 years old. They move from Year 6 in primary school to Year 7 in secondary school. Overall, most children make successful secondary school transitions (Alston, Sammons and Mortimore, 1985; Galton, Gray & Rudduck, 1999; McGee, Ward, Gibbons & Harlow, 2004). Successful transitions can lead to the further enhancement of self-esteem, positive self-identity and the development of emotionally healthy and resilient children and young people. There are a minority of vulnerable children for whom transition is problematic (Galton et al., 1999). These children are susceptible to unsuccessful transitions which can have negative implications for their future social and emotional well-being.

This research explored six vulnerable pupils' experiences of transition. The research also explored these pupils' experiences of a Transition Project they had participated in whilst in Year 6 (final year of primary school).

This chapter will examine the terminology associated with 'transition', explore national priorities about transition and introduce and describe the Transition Project being investigated. The importance of listening to children is also addressed.

1.1. Terminology: Transition and Vulnerable Children

1.1.1 Definition of Transition

Transition has been defined as, 'a sharp discontinuity with previous life events' (Brammer, 1992, p.240). Throughout their lives, people negotiate a series of transitions, in which they are forced to adapt to changes in circumstances. In this research the term 'transition' was used to signify a pupil's move and adjustment

phase from primary to secondary school. The transition from primary to secondary education has been the focal point of much previous research (Galton et al., 1999; McGee et al., 2004).

1.1.2 Definition of Vulnerable Children

Galton et al. (1999) argued that there are groups of pupils who are especially susceptible to negative outcomes throughout the transition period. These outcomes include: decline in attainment, decreased motivation, disengagement from education, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and social exclusion. These groups of children are particularly vulnerable as they make the transition to secondary school.

Nationally there is no single definition of vulnerable children and young people. The DfES Vulnerable Children's Grant (2003) report noted that the following groups of children and young people can be referred to as 'vulnerable': looked-after children, children unable to attend school due to medical needs, gypsy/traveller children, asylum seekers and refugees, young carers, school refusers, teenage parents and young offenders. Most Local Authorities define vulnerable pupils as: pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, excluded pupils, pupils who are 'socially vulnerable', children who are considered to be 'at risk', pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and pupils from minority ethnic groups. Ofsted (2005) only lists two groups of vulnerable pupils: looked-after children and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. When unveiling plans to reform Special Educational Needs within the UK, Sarah Teather (Children's Minister) regarded the term 'vulnerable' as children with special educational needs and disabilities (DfE website, 2012). Similarly, the Queen during her speech at the state opening of parliament in

May 2012 called for the government to propose measures to improve provision for disabled children and children with special educational needs (Guardian, 2012).

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, in May 2012 noted that children on free school meals are more likely to experience difficulties during the transition to secondary school and called for schools to use the 'Pupil Premium' to support these pupils.

The definitions of 'vulnerable children' previously discussed appear to be limited.

Therefore, a broader pragmatic approach to the definition of 'vulnerable' has been adopted. This research explored pupils' (who participated in a Transition Project) experiences of transition. For pupils to participate in the Transition Project, they must have been identified by educational professionals, as being vulnerable and further susceptible to negative outcomes than others during transition. The pupils that participated in the Transition Project and within this research fell into a range of categories; pupils who had social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, pupils with mental health issues such as anxiety problems and depression, pupils who had recently suffered a bereavement, pupils with a physical disability, pupils with speech and language difficulties and pupils who were known to social services. Each pupil's particular vulnerability is discussed further in Chapter 4. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the term 'vulnerable' referred to pupils who were considered by professionals to be at risk of experiencing difficulties during transition.

Upon further inspection of the various definitions of 'vulnerable' I concluded that each of the participants within this research met the criteria to be regarded as 'vulnerable' by at least one of the different definitions put forward by researchers and policy makers. Sarah Teather (Children's Minister) referred to vulnerable children as those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. Each of the participants was on the SEN register at 'School Action Plus' in their different primary

schools. Ryan (participant 6) has Cerebral Palsy and is registered as disabled. Ofsted (2005) noted that looked-after children and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities could be referred to as vulnerable. Lizzie (participant 4) was known to social services and had been in care in the past. The DfES Vulnerable Children's Grant (2003) criteria of vulnerable pupils included those with medical needs. The term 'medical needs' encompasses mental health concerns (DFES, 2001). Both Ollie (participant 1) and Mandy (participant 3) were well known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and were receiving treatment for anxiety and depression. Finally, Anderson et al. (2000) suggested that pupils who present with behavioural difficulties prior to transition are more vulnerable and likely to experience negative outcomes throughout the transition period. Jackson (participant 5) presented with significant behavioural issues in primary school. Each of the pupil's different needs will be further addressed in Chapter 4. The purpose of this paragraph is to highlight that although the participants do not necessarily fit neatly into one of the definitions of 'vulnerable' provided by researchers, each participant separately meets different criteria which entitle them to be referred to as 'vulnerable'.

1.2 The Importance of a Successful Transition

There is a growing evidence base to suggest that the primary to secondary school transition is a time at which pupils need to be supported (West, Sweeting & Young, 2010). This time has been described as 'one of the most difficult in pupils' educational careers' (Zeedyk, Gallacher, Henderson, Hope, Husband, & Lindsay, 2003, p.67). The UK Government has recognized that 'too many children still find the transition from primary to secondary school difficult' (DfES, 2004, p.61).

In 2008 the Department of Education published a research report entitled 'What makes transition successful?' (Evangelou, Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). Their analysis revealed five factors that promote a successful transition; developing friendships which improves self-esteem and confidence, settling in well to their new school so that no concerns are raised, showing an interest in school work, understanding and settling into their new routines and experiencing curriculum continuity. As noted previously, the majority of pupils experience a 'successful transition'. However, there is a small but significant minority of pupils for whom transitions are a difficult time and therefore require additional support. National Priorities and Educational Policies have highlighted the importance of supporting these pupils through transition.

An unsuccessful transition can not only negatively affect a child and their family, but can have wider implications for society. There are significant financial and social factors that impact on society because of pupils who experience negative educational outcomes, for example, high employment rates, crime, high illiteracy rates, teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol dependency.

1.3 Transition in National Priorities and Educational Policy

Noyes (2006) argued that transition between primary and secondary school is still problematic in the UK, despite decades of research and policy intervention aimed at improving the move. In previous years transition has been in the national spotlight, mainly because of concerns about under-performance in the early secondary years. There are increasing national priorities on supporting pupils through transition. This

results in a pressure on local authorities to meet these needs of all pupils in Year 6 and 7 and evaluate the effectiveness of their systems of support.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority reported concerns that 11 and 12 year olds do not make the progress they should upon starting secondary school (SCAA, 1996). A DfEE report into transitions also emphasised the importance of giving priority to the difficult time of transition in order to maintain pupil commitment to learning (Galton et al., 1999). Most pupils are well prepared for transition and move on with confidence. However it is stated in the report that some groups of pupils are more at risk than others of withdrawing during these critical and important moments of transition throughout their school careers. It is suggested within the report that the 'seeds of social exclusion may be planted' during this time (DfEE, 1999, p.7).

The impact and the importance of supporting children through transition are relevant in today's society. During the summer of 2011 the UK saw many disaffected young people engage in criminal and destructive activity during the riots on the streets of many cities. Previous research has shown that many children become disaffected and disengaged from education during the transition to secondary school (Berndt & Mekos, 1995). A greater understanding of the difficulties transition can cause and appropriate interventions are needed to support these children.

Similarly, research has shown that children who present with problem behaviours in primary school are at risk of being excluded within the first year of secondary school (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm & Splittgerber, 2000). Although exclusion rates tend to

rise every year until Year 11, the biggest rise in exclusion rates happens at the transition from primary to secondary school (Cullingford, 1999). Therefore transition is a vital time to support many children exhibiting difficult and challenging behaviours.

Ofsted (2008) in a report entitled 'Re-engaging disaffected youths in secondary school' suggested that transition is a crucial time to identify and support families, children and young people who are beginning to experience or show signs of becoming disaffected. It is well researched and known that disaffected or non-engaged youths are more likely to become members of gangs, engage in criminal activity, use alcohol and drugs and become teenage parents. Ofsted (2008) found that one of the factors which appeared to be most successful in helping disaffected pupils to enjoy learning and remain in education, was the careful management of all key staff of the primary and secondary schools in support of these pupils through their transition.

Ofsted (2010) in their report entitled 'Children Missing from Education' noted that transition is an important time for preventing children from becoming 'missing'. They suggested that primary and secondary schools should promote good attendance, pay careful attention to and give support at key transition points. 'Transition times are exceptionally critical to manage well as vulnerable children and young people who are not receiving education and whose whereabouts are unknown may be particularly at risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm' (Ofsted, 2010, p.4).

The Ofsted (2002) report stated that the smooth and effective transition to secondary school at age 11 has long been a priority and that pupils do not make enough progress from Year 6 to the end of Year 7; 'continuity and progression in learning as pupils move from primary to secondary schools are longstanding weaknesses of the education system' (Ofsted, 2002, p2).

In order to solve this identified problem and prepare pupils for transition, Ofsted (2002) proposed that schools should improve the delivery of standardised documentation between schools which would reduce the amount of testing in secondary school. They also proposed that primary schools should prepare pupils for changes in teaching approaches and styles when they move to secondary school.

Despite the importance attributed to this 'smooth transition' in UK educational policy, West et al. (2010) noted that exploring the impact of transition on children's experiences of future learning and well-being still remains controversial because the evidence base is inconsistent and policy often contradicts each other. For example, within the Ofsted (2002) report it was noted that all of the primary schools within their study recognised that good arrangements for secondary transition for the Year 6 pupils were very important. However, it was low on all the schools list of priorities. They found that improving primary-secondary transition did not feature specifically in any of the schools' development/improvement plans. Similar contradictory results were found in the secondary schools.

It is widely understood and known that when moving to secondary school, pupils encounter a number of changes, such as: new equipment, school uniform, a variety of classrooms, seating arrangements, a wider range of teaching styles and different expectations about homework, ways of learning and independent study. Ofsted noted that very few schools thought carefully enough about these changes. It was discovered that there was generally little, if any, discussion taking place between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers about preparing pupils for the changes.

Overall Ofsted (2002) highlighted that many if not all primary and secondary schools were not doing enough to support pupils with their transition even though many schools claim to recognise the importance and significance of such a transition. They recommended that all schools and local authorities evaluate more systematically the impact of transition arrangements made by the school and local authority on the progress and attitudes of pupils.

1.4 The Importance of Listening to Children

Changes in perceptions about the importance of the child's and young person's views are reflective in changes in policy documents and legislation over the latter half of the 20th century, and the beginnings of the 21st century. In 1989 the United Convention on the Rights of the Child insisted, through article 12 and 13 that 'state parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely' (UNCRC, 1989).

In 2003 the Every Child Matters (ECM) Agenda was publicised and later framed within the 2004 Children's Act. Every Child Matters aimed to ensure that every child

was safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving in their life, making a positive contribution and economically stable. The views of the child were always expected to be sought in achieving these aims. It must be acknowledged that official new administration educational policy (Conservative Government 2010) has moved on from the ECM agenda but it is still being used in day to day conversations within schools and between educational professionals.

More recently Ofsted (2010) highlighted the importance of talking and listening to children and young people regarding their move to secondary school as a way of informing staff members who are managing their transition and subsequently developing appropriate intervention plans.

A DCSF (2008) report found that what primary schools' thought of their help to support children's transition, differed from the children's experience (Evangelou et al. 2008). Therefore it is clearly important to explore children's experiences and perceptions of any support they receive for their transition in order to ensure the support is appropriate and useful.

This research explored pupils' views and experiences of a Transition Project and their own experiences of transition, in the hope of further developing and improving the project for the future and thus further increasing the knowledge and research base surrounding transition.

1.5 Introduction to the Transition Project

This research explored the experiences of pupils who participated in a Transition Project. This Project was developed within the London Local Authority where I was working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist.

In light of the Ofsted (2002) report which highlighted the potential negative outcomes experienced by vulnerable children during the time of primary-secondary transition, a London Local Authority (LA) decided to use their resources to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable pupils as they approached transition. The LA funded the development of a new support programme which would identify and offer support to vulnerable pupils during transition.

The Transition Project (a pseudo name given to the support programme to ensure anonymity of the participants) was developed in 2006 by a multi-agency team, consisting of Educational Psychologists, Advisory Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Learning Mentors and Mental Health Professionals. Two members of the Educational Psychology Team from the LA worked one day a week on the Project. This involved working directly with schools and families, individual work with children and developing and running groups for vulnerable children.

The Transition Project aimed to prevent negative outcomes associated with transition (not settling in, exclusions, bullying) for vulnerable children, by addressing the social and emotional needs of pupils through their transition. The Transition Project strived to reduce anxiety and promote resilience of vulnerable children in Year 6 (final year of primary school, aged 11).

The Transition Project had two strands to address needs on an individual pupil and whole class level. Details of both strands can be found in Appendix 6. This research

explored pupils' experiences of the individual strand. Pupils who participated within the individual strand of the Transition Project were involved in the following activities; two individual transition reviews (derived from person-centred-planning reviews), the development and implementation of an individual bespoke intervention package and participation in a social skills group. Further details of the individual strand of the Transition Project will be addressed in Chapter 3.

Both the individual strand and the whole class programme have been evaluated in the past by members of the Educational Psychology Team using pre and post Transition Project scaling questionnaires. Details of the results of these evaluations can be found in Appendix 6. These questionnaires were created by the professionals working on the Transition Project and are therefore not standardised. This greatly affects the reliability and validity of the evaluations that have been previously carried out. These measures indicated that the pupils' levels of anxiety decrease after participating in the Transition Project. The transitional experiences of the pupils who had participated in the Transition Project and their experiences of the Project itself had not been explored in the past.

1.6 Personal Reflexivity

Within this section I aim to further explain my position in relation to this current research. I will give some background information as to how I came to select 'transition' as my research topic and I will attempt to outline the assumptions I held at the beginning of the research process. I will also reflect on my own experience of transition.

I began my Year 2 placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist within a London Local Authority whilst I was considering a topic for my doctoral research. My placement contract stipulated that I was to work three days a week; two days on casework presented to me by schools and for one day I was seconded to work on the Transition Project. I had always understood that transition was a difficult time for many pupils but I did not know the full consequences and the negative outcomes that could occur if vulnerable pupils were not given the appropriate amount of support. I therefore read around the topic of transition to better understand the importance of supporting children through this period. I familiarised myself with the procedures of the Transition Project and the previous evaluations that had been conducted. I learnt that the evaluations which had taken place, although not standardised, had shown a reduction in pupils' anxieties as they approached transition. Further details of these evaluations can be found in Appendix 6. I was interested in the pupils' own perceptions and experiences of the Project and I discovered that any previous evaluation of the Project did not explore this information. Also from reading around the topic of transition, I noted that there was a considerable lack of literature exploring the in depth experiences of vulnerable children through transition. A literature review was conducted for the current research and will be explored in detail in Chapter 2.

Once I had decided to examine the topic of transition for my doctoral research, I began reflecting back on my own experiences of transition and considered how those experiences might influence my assumptions of the research itself. I found transition a difficult time which was wrought with anxiety. Therefore, at the beginning of the research process I assumed that all children experienced high levels of

anxiety surrounding transition. As I became more involved with the research and the Transition Project, I asked others around me; professionals and friends about their own experiences of transition. I discovered that for the majority of people I spoke to transition appeared to be a time that invoked some level of anxiety but also was a time of great excitement and new opportunities. I suppose I had not considered transition as an exciting time in a child's life. Therefore, I had to be mindful of my own assumptions of transition when conducting interviews for this research, so that my opinions did not influence the responses of the participants. Again, I had to be very aware of my assumptions while interpreting the data as I wanted each child's voice to be heard uninfluenced by my beliefs.

The aim of addressing these assumptions is not to try to be unbiased, objective or impartial, but they are to position myself and my point of view at the beginning of the research process.

1.6.1 Personal Position

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I understand the various difficulties that many vulnerable children experience during the transition from primary to secondary school. Some of the cases referred to me by secondary schools concern pupils who have never fully settled in their new school and may be experiencing difficulties such as: low self-esteem and confidence, disruptive behaviour and refusing to engage with school work and school staff.

As a reflective practitioner and researcher, I believe it is important for me to reflect on my own transition from primary to secondary school. I grew up in a predominantly

white, middle class, Catholic suburb of Dublin, Ireland. I attended an all-girls national primary school. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. I was the youngest in my class and had literacy difficulties all throughout primary school. My parents and teachers all agreed that staying back a year (repeating Year 6) would be of great benefit to me and that this time might allow me to 'catch up' on my literacy. I did not repeat Year 6 in my current primary school, instead I moved to the primary section of my new private convent secondary school. I would walk in the door of my new school with my old class mates and they would turn left for the secondary school and I, right for the primary. The next year I moved up to the secondary school. I found these two times of transition be very difficult. My self confidence and self-esteem were affected and I became a quiet, withdrawn and an anxious adolescent. Over the course of my time in secondary school, I made friends, engaged in sporting activities and as a result my self-esteem and confidence began to grow again.

I do not remember my time of transition from my familiar primary school to secondary school as a fond one. It was a time surrounded by anxiety, worry and fear. In contrast, both of my siblings enjoyed moving to secondary school and did not have any difficulty with their transitions. I believe that my challenging transition period has allowed me to gain a somewhat fuller understanding of the different emotions, thoughts, anxieties and feelings children may experience when moving to secondary school. My experience has heightened my interest in the support systems in place particularly in primary schools to help and support children with their transition.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2. Chapter Overview

Pupils' transition from primary to secondary school is a key topic for many researchers, practitioners, educational professionals and policy makers. There is a growing body of literature which explores how this transition can both positively and negatively affect the lives of pupils. This chapter will explore the role of school in pupils' lives to help ground this research and show the importance of a successful transition. The chapter will also address previous and current literature relating to transition, explore theoretical and psychological models of transition and examine literature in which pupils' experiences and perceptions of transition are considered.

2.1 Literature Strategy

As the subject area of transition is so broad, I decided to undertake a narrative literature review exploring research into transition before conducting a systematic literature review on the specific area of 'children's experiences and transition'. The systematic literature review will be discussed later in this chapter.

Green, Johnson & Adams (2006) argued that a narrative literature review can be a valuable contribution and provide further insight into a subject area. Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan (2008) noted that the primary aim of a narrative literature review is to provide a 'comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge and highlighting the significance of new research' (p.38). In order to complete a narrative literature review, a search of the PsycINFO, EBSCO and PubMed databases was conducted. Search terms included, 'transition to secondary school' and 'primary to secondary transfer'. The 'Snowball' method (Creswell, 2003) was adopted to acquire

more literature references. Here relevant papers that were cited in articles examining transition were identified and investigated further. Additional information was accessed from the Department of Education website. Local psychologists and educational professionals were also consulted.

2.2 Role of School

Within school children further develop their language, play, social and emotional skills. Children also enhance their academic skills through the development of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. Schaffer (1996) noted that school is one of the first social structures that most children experience, and it provides them with knowledge of cultural and social norms. As a social structure, pupils learn how to interact appropriately with peers and teachers. Here many friendships are made. These social interactions with their peers are a crucial factor for the child's social development and contribute positively to a child's attitude towards school (Galton & Willcocks, 1983). Pellegrini and Blachford (2000) noted that pupils highly value these peer relationships and friendships and regard them as very important to school life.

For many children, school is regarded as a safe and supportive environment, where they can learn new skills (Russell, 2003). Primary aged children have been found to be more positive about teachers. Charlton (1996) found that children viewed teachers as a person they could receive support from. However, when a pupil had made the transition to secondary school, pupils did not view their new teachers as supportive and helpful as their primary teachers (Backe-Hansen, 2002). This could partly be due to the limited time secondary teachers spend with a particular cohort of pupils.

Therefore it can be argued that for all children, school is an essential element of their social, academic and emotional development. Understanding the significance of school in the lives of pupils is important within the context of this research, as it gives one insight into the pupil's world and it also shows the value of a successful transition so that a happy school life is not altered.

2.3 Developments in Research regarding Transition

Research to date has emphasised the many concerns that pupils report prior to making the transition to secondary school. Anderson et al. (2000) noted that developmental and systemic transitions are often closely related. They stated that many pupils traverse puberty at the same time they make the transition from primary school to secondary school. Until the late 1980s, most researchers operated within a framework in which pupils' problems with school transitions were believed to be a result of their own personal developmental changes (puberty). In the last 20 years, there has been a notable shift. Researchers have begun to examine the impact of contextual and ecological factors on pupils' abilities, attainment and skills to navigate and cope with the demands and pressures associated with systemic transitions (Harter, Whitesell & Kowalski, 1992; Schumaker, 1998).

Within the previous literature review, two words, 'transfer' and 'transition' have been used interchangeably to refer both to the pupils' move out of one school system and into another, or within the same school between different years. Galton et al. (1999) use the term 'transfer' to describe a pupil's move from one educational setting to another (i.e. the move to secondary school). In contrast, the DCSF (2008) report used the term 'transition' to refer to the period of time it takes for a pupil to settle and adjust to their new setting.

It is my opinion that the term 'transfer' is constrained by time, for example, a pupil has made the transfer to secondary school on their first day of Year 7. The term 'transfer' is concrete and finite in nature. It is the literal movement from one place to another. The term does not allow for further exploration into experiences or understandings of moving to secondary school. The term 'transition' appears to be more fluid in nature. Therefore, as this research was exploring pupils' experiences, the term 'transition' was adopted to address pupils' move and adjustment phase from primary to secondary schools.

2.4 Changes associated with Transition

As previously noted, some pupils find the transition to secondary school a challenging time. Why is school transition so difficult for some children? Simply put, the primary-secondary school transition disrupts the continuity of life, especially school-life which as previously discussed is very important in pupils' lives. Roderick (1993) stated that as children move from primary to secondary school they are confronted with significant changes, such as;

- Increased school size (both in terms of the physical size of the new building and the number of students and staff within the school)
- Fewer personal relationships with teachers
- Greater emphasis on relative ability and competition (in contrast with effort and improvement of which they would have experienced in primary school)
- A greater work load and more pressure to succeed
- Greater emphasis on 'rules of behaviour' with less tolerance for misbehaviour.

Primary school can represent a comfortable and stable environment for most children; where children usually have one teacher and one set of classmates.

However, within secondary school adolescents experience constant changes with their teachers, their classmates and even their environment (going from one classroom to the next).

Pupils also encounter changes to their social position; they shift from being the oldest in their primary school to being the youngest in their secondary school. This shift is often very difficult for vulnerable pupils to cope with. In my experience I have seen that many vulnerable pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties often socialise with children younger than themselves in their primary school. When these pupils move to secondary school, they are now the youngest and they can often find it difficult to interact and engage with their own peer group.

2.5 Impact of Transition

2.5.1 Impact on Attainment

Early studies researching the transition into secondary school mainly explored changes in academic progress of typical children (i.e. not vulnerable). All children are affected by the transition from primary to secondary school in some way. It has been found that most students may initially experience some decline in their average results, when compared to the results they received in Year 6 (Roderick, 1993). This finding is consistent throughout international studies where pupils' make the transition at different ages (Murdock, Anderman & Hodge, 2000; Ofsted, 2002). Therefore it can be argued that there appears to be consistent evidence to suggest

that any transition in education may cause a drop in achievement, academic performance and attainment regardless of the age at which transition takes place.

There are many different explanations put forward by researchers as to why there is a decline in achievement. Eccles and Wigfield (1993) attributed this decline to the change in pupils' personal concepts of themselves as learners as they grow older. Their research highlighted that as pupils' get older their attitudes to school and performance in subjects decreases. The authors also noted that as pupils' levels of interest in academic performance decreases, pupils' interest in non-academic activities, such as sport and socialising with friend's increases.

Other explanations about the decline in academic performance during transition argued that during this time pupils' are primarily affected by the onset of adolescence (Potter, 2001).

Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber and Hernandez-Jozefowicz (1997) stressed that individual differences should always be considered with transition adjustment. They suggested that individual differences can influence future development; for example, if a child's (with poor coping skills and weak social support) initial results decrease at the beginning of Year 7, the child could develop a negative self-concept that begins to undermine his/her academic motivation. Reduced motivation, can in turn, become a self-fulfilling prophecy leading to subsequent further declines in performance and perhaps to eventual disengagement from school (Fenzel, 2000).

Another possible reason for a decline in motivation associated with transition is that pupils' change their beliefs about effort and ability during adolescence. Nicholls and Gardner (1999) noted that as pupils approach adolescence they view ability as a stable trait with only a small relationship to effort. In secondary school it can be

argued that ability is more valued than effort (for example; GCSE results) and if a pupil puts in a lot of effort into a task and subsequently fails, they and others may view themselves as incompetent and therefore lose motivation to engage with that task again.

However, on the other hand, it has been argued by Wampler, Munsch and Adams (2002) that an initial drop in results may positively affect those children with greater personal and cognitive resources. Their argument stated that these pupil's self-perceptions of academic competence may be challenged in a way that motivates them to work harder. Their suggestion continued to state that subsequent improvement in results not only reinforces their general positive self-perception but also fuels their academic motivation (Wampler et al., 2002).

2.5.2 Impact on Self-Concept and Emotional Well-Being

Research has moved the focus of transition to explore the social and emotional factors associated with moving to secondary school, but yet again, the majority of the research conducted examined non-vulnerable groups. As mentioned previously transition can affect and alter pupils' self-concept of themselves. There is evidence to suggest that the transition from primary to secondary school can have a negative impact on pupils' self-concept (Harter et al., 1992) and on their subjective evaluation in core curriculum subjects (Anderson et al., 2000).

It has been discovered that most children also experience periods of anxiety and/or depression during the time of transition (Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman & Midgley, 1991). As noted previously, there are some children who find systemic transitions especially problematic (Lord, Eccles & McCarthy, 1994). These pupils often experience decreases and declines in self esteem, academic performance,

motivation, depression and anxiety and these can persist late into secondary school and cause many problems for the pupils, academically, socially and emotionally.

American research has found that, pupils who find transition particularly stressful and have difficulty coping are more likely than their same-age peers to leave school prior to finishing or graduation (Roderick, 1993).

Pratt and George (2005) found that the majority of anxieties and concerns expressed by pupils are based on rumours and stories and tend to be social rather than academic in nature. There is some evidence from research to show that pupils during transition often experience increased feelings of isolation during their first year at secondary school (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998). However, Ward (2001) argued that transitions are better organised and more user friendly than they once were, so few pupils experience anxiety for long periods of time. Ward (2001) noted that anxieties concerning coping at a new school quickly decrease and are generally replaced by long-term worries about schooling. This finding is interesting as it seems to contradict what previous research has shown; that pupils' level of motivation in their schooling decrease as they grow up. Although, it must be noted that Ward's (2001) findings cannot be generalised to the UK population. The author investigated transition between middle school and secondary school in New Zealand. In New Zealand, some pupils attend middle school (Year 9 and Year 10) before entering secondary school at Year 11 (age 15). In the UK, children make the transition to secondary school at age 11, four years younger than the participants within the research. Therefore, it could be argued that fifteen year olds would have the added maturity to cope with the changes of moving to secondary school than their eleven year old counterparts, hence why they can adjust quickly to their new school. Also,

fifteen year olds could be more concerned about schooling as they approach the age for national exams.

2.5.3 Impact on Social Adjustment

As discussed previously, peer relationships and friendships are an important factor for pupils to feel happy and positive about school. Transition usually occurs when friendships and social interaction are particularly significant for young adolescents. During this time transition can disrupt friendship networks. This can affect pupils' performance and success in secondary school (Barone, Aguire-Deandis & Trickett, 1991).

It is widely known and agreed that early adolescence is a time of heightened vulnerability for many pupils (Morrison Gutman & Midgley, 2000). McGee et al. (2004) noted that the developmental needs of early adolescents 'include self-esteem, motivation, self-regulation, family support and a sense of belonging' (p. 15). Pupils with poor social and academic skills and low esteem are most at risk of not adjusting well to secondary school, as making friendship groups may be more difficult for these pupils. Therefore, they may experience feelings of loneliness and isolation during transition.

Midgley and Maehr (2000) found that positive relationships and a sense of school belonging were strongly related to pupils' positive attitudes about school, self esteem, depression and feelings of anxiety. McDougall and Hymel (1998) highlighted that while there was a great variation in how well pupils adjusted to secondary school, social adjustment both prior and post transition appeared to be the strongest predictor of a pupil's transition experience. Therefore, loneliness and low self-esteem in primary school may continue into secondary school.

Thus, it is of the utmost importance to support pupils prior to transition who have poor social skills and difficulty making and maintaining friendships.

2.6 Vulnerable Pupils and Transition

It is widely acknowledged that some pupils are more vulnerable than others during the transition experience (Anderson et al., 2000). West et al. (2010) noted that the majority of research exploring vulnerable pupils' transitions is mainly from the US. McGee et al. (2004) noted that many secondary schools take steps to ensure pupils are supported and adjust well to their new environment with minimum disturbance. However research has shown that those pupils struggling in primary school for a variety of reasons, such as, poor academic achievement, difficulties with social interactions, lack of engagement and motivation etc, were still deemed to be 'at risk' in secondary school (Murdock et al. 2000). McGee et al. (2004) stressed that 'the implication is that intervention to help these students is needed prior to transition' (p.34) i.e. in their primary school.

2.6.1 Characteristics of Vulnerable Pupils

Anderson et al. (2000) identified four individual and environmental factors that can affect a pupils' transition to secondary school. The authors stated that gender was one of the most important and influential factors in making a successful transition. Simmons and Blyth (1987) noted that girls tended to be more vulnerable to the environmental (changing of schools and relationships) and the biological (onset of puberty) transitions of adolescence. As girls were more inclined to place extra emphasis and importance on peer relations than boys did, they could find the transition period difficult as it may cause disruptions to their friendship and peer groups.

Anderson et al's. (2000) second factor related to unsuccessful systemic transitions was that of 'prior problem behaviour'. Much research (Berndt & Mekos, 1995) has shown that pupils with behavioural difficulties in primary school, tend to have more problems adjusting and settling in secondary school. It can be argued that in the UK, despite the increasing current concerns about anti-social behaviour among children and young people, (for example the riots of summer 2011) and its implications for disengagement from education, it has not featured much in relation to the primary-secondary transitions.

The third factor was low academic achievement. It could be argued that pupils who struggle with academic lessons in primary school (i.e. those with some sort of learning difficulties) are not academically prepared for secondary school. The level, standard and amount of work required for pupils to complete in Year 7 is different to the work they are set in Year 6. It could also be argued that pupils who have learning difficulties in secondary school, may not be identified as readily as they would have been in primary school, as the pupils have more teachers. It has also been found that pupils requiring additional support for learning may be more likely to experience difficulties with transition (Schagen and Kerr, 1999) and experience increased levels of stress during these times (Hanline, 1991).

The fourth factor explored low Socio-Economic Status (SES). The authors conducted their research at the turn of the new millennium in the United States and therefore discussed the implications of race and Socio-Economic Status of African Americans and Hispanic Americans who live in poverty. It is widely acknowledged that there is a correlation between race and SES both in the US and within the UK educational systems. Epstein, Elwood, Hey and Maw (1998) stated that the 'underachievement' of pupils at school is a strongly classed and racialised phenomenon and that Socio-

Economic Status, class, race and parental education continue to be the most reliable indicators of a child's educational attainment and achievement.

The DCSF (2008) report entitled 'What makes transition successful'? found that of the children from low SES households, 72 percent did not get used to the new routines with ease when moving to secondary school. The report also found that 58 percent of these children did not settle in well to their new school. This figure is significantly higher than children from high SES households, where the majority of these pupils settled in very well to their new secondary school.

Anderson's et al. (2000) four factors discussed above; gender, prior problem behaviour, low academic achievement and SES/race do not stand alone from one another, but can be and usually are combined in many ways. For example, in the US and the UK there appears to be a disproportionate number of exclusion of minority ethnic boys. This has been a national concern for many years (DfES, 2000). The DfES (2000) report found that Black Caribbean pupils are just over three times as likely as White pupils to be permanently excluded from school. In 2004 UNICEF outlined the role that poverty has to play in Black Caribbean boys' underachievement and noted that governments have become increasingly aware that boys and young men are more likely to be alienated from school if they come from poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Anderson et al. (2000) argued that overall, gender, disruptive problem behaviour, low achievement and SES/race combine together to make successful and smooth transition very unlikely. Pupils who face these difficulties during transition are often marginalized and can find adjusting to secondary school rather difficult.

2.7 The Importance of Listening to Vulnerable Children

Much research appears to centre or focus on pupils' academic achievement or their ability to adjust into school during the time of transition (Harter et al., 1992; Anderson et al., 2000). However, it is important to focus on what the pupils think, experience and feel about transition.

A large amount of research concerning children focuses on how children affect adults' lives, for example; how disruptive behaviours in the classroom impact on a teacher's ability to teach (Kaplan, Gheen and Midgley, 2000). Other research has explored child related issues through discussions with only adults, for example; parental well-being in relation to children's behaviour (Baker, Blacher & Olsson, 2005). Therefore, some of the previous literature on children's participation in an event or phenomena has generally focused on the perceived impact of such an event from adults' perspective rather than on children's views of their own world and their experiences of particular phenomena.

2.7.1 Listening to the View's of Vulnerable Children

In the past children have been excluded from personally participating in research as they have been considered potentially too immature (Robinson & Kellett, 2004). There have also been concerns regarding the vulnerability of children and ethical issues, such as, informed consent and confidentiality. These ethical issues shall be discussed further in Chapter 3. Within previous research there were also further concerns regarding whether vulnerable children and children with special educational needs have the appropriate cognitive ability, linguistic and social skills to provide adult researchers with rich, reliable and valid interview data (Robinson & Kellett, 2004). Data was generally not collected directly from children themselves, instead an adult (usually a mother) would give their opinion about a certain

phenomenon affecting children. This trend believed adults had the greater knowledge, expertise and experience than children, even in matters that affected children directly (Deatrick & Faux, 1991).

Children and young people with communication difficulties often have their views excluded from research. A report written by people with communication impairments provides interesting, powerful and insightful comments about their communication difficulties (Disabled people using Scope Services, 2002). A disabled child noted within this report:

We are used to people saying we cannot communicate, but of course they are wrong. In fact we have powerful and effective ways of communicating and we usually have many ways to let you know what it is we have in mind. Yes, we have communication difficulties, and some of those are linked to with our impairments. But by far the greater part of our difficulty is caused by 'speaking' people not having the experience, time or commitment to try to understand us or to include us in everyday life (Disabled people using Scope services, 2002, p.1-2).

This statement emphasises the importance of listening to all children and young people and ensuring that appropriate measures are used so that these children and young people can communicate effectively with others. The use of visual aids within the current research to help aid communication is discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.8 Coping and Resilience

Transition has been shown to be a difficult time for many vulnerable pupils. During this time pupils have to be flexible and have to adapt to different and perhaps difficult

situations. The process of coping includes ways in which a pupil can manage their emotions, think constructively, regulate and direct behaviour and actively seek to alter or decrease the sources of stress (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen & Wadsworth, 2001). The ability to cope with these types of stressful events has been identified as a significant protective individual trait. Successful transitions rely on the coping resources of pupils, which include those concepts of the self (problem solving skills, interpersonal skills) and the social environment (the availability of a supportive social network; Compas, 1987). The use of good and effective coping strategies during transition periods predicts favourable future outcomes, including higher and positive self-esteem, fewer behavioural problems, lower levels of depression or anxiety issues and positive adjustment (Millis & Chapman, 2000).

Jindal-Snape & Foggie (2008) found that for a minority of pupils the issue of transition was complex and fraught with difficulties. The authors suggested that transition had a considerable impact on a child's internal attributes, family, peers, school systems and community. It was emphasised that all these aspects of a pupil's life had to work in union with one another in order for a pupil's transition to be successful. Similar to previous research, these findings cannot be generalised to the wider population. The authors interviewed nine children from various year groups. Some children were in their final year of primary school, others were in their first and even second year of secondary school. Therefore, each child had a very different account of their experience of transition depending on their year group. For example, a child in their second year of secondary school may feel more settled and confident than those preparing for transition in their final year of primary school.

The research confirms that the transition to secondary school brings changes that are likely to have various negative impacts on a child's life and that successful

outcomes rely, as Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson and Pope (2007) argued, on the coping strategies available to each individual student. The academic and social problems that students encounter, challenge these coping skills and can be a main source of adolescent stress throughout secondary school and on into later life (Elias, 2001).

The stress associated with transition is widely acknowledged but there is some disagreement about the length and severity of that stress (Ward, 2001). McGee et al. (2004) noted that stress appears to accompany any transition from school to school, regardless of what age this transition occurs at. However, Hendry and Kloep (2002) suggested that 'normative shift transitions' (usually applied through law or influential social norms, for example starting formal education, beginning secondary school or retirement age) are less stressful in comparison to other life changes as individuals usually have access to emotional and social support during these times.

Moving to secondary school invariably includes some time of adjustment. As previously mentioned pupils encounter a wide number of changes during transition. McGee et al. (2004) noted that this 'adjustment period may last until a pupil is able to show they can cope by making appropriate responses to the demands of a new environment' (p.13). The use of coping resources is central to adjustment. A pupil has to use their own coping strategies to help them adjust to their new environment. Cotterell (1986) discussed that having adequate and appropriate information about transition is an important factor in a pupils' ability to cope and a lack of information can produce a sense of anxiety, confusion and entrapment in their new school. This suggests that supporting pupils prior to transition is critical to ensuring a successful transition.

Newman (2002) noted that a resilient child is one who 'can resist adversity, cope with uncertainty and recover more successfully from traumatic events or episodes' (p.3). Resilience is acquired through lived experiences and is related to one's ability to cope with stressful events. Rutter (1985) argued that resilience is created. He suggested that when children are encouraged to have a positive appraisal of themselves by adults around them, they are enabled to feel more optimistic about their own ability to cope with different situations. Therefore, a child's ability to cope and level of resilience is related to their support networks. Brewin & Statham (2011) aimed to discover the key factors that support Looked After Children through transition. Their results indicated that children with low levels of resilience and poor coping skills were less likely to settle well into secondary school.

2.9 Psychological Models of Transition

It has been previously mentioned that transitions may cause stress and increase the risk of poor mental health. Several psychological models have been proposed to explain the experience of transition; Model of Developmental Change (Hendry and Kloep, 2002), The Social Development Model (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996), The Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Model of Personal Change (Fisher and Savage, 1999).

It was decided that The Model of Personal Change was best fitting within the context of the current research.

2.9.1 Model of Personal Change

Fisher and Savage's (1999) 'Model of Personal Change' also known as 'Personal Transitional Curve' described nine different emotional states people experience as they manage life's many transitions.

1. Anxiety: due to events being outside a person's control and understanding.
Often people do not have enough information about a new setting or event, that they cannot predict ways in which they will behave in their new environment, which in turn can cause anxiety. In March of the academic year, Year 6 pupils discover what secondary school they will be attending in the coming autumn. Prior to this information, many pupils may feel anxious as the choice of secondary school is beyond their control.
2. Happiness can occur when a person views their transition as a time for potential improvement. In this phase people generally expect the best and anticipate a bright future. Many pupils are often excited about new and different aspects of secondary school and are keen to know as much information as possible prior to their transition, (Ashton, 2008).
3. Fear often arises when a person realises that there may be changes occurring in their own behaviour and self-perceptions in order to adapt to their new environment. As discussed previously, transition can effect and alter pupils' self-concept of themselves. Research indicates that transition can have a negative impact on pupils' self-concept (Harter et al., 1992).
4. Threat that the transition will alter future choices and other people's perception of them.
5. Guilt from exploring events in the past and examining them to re-define their sense of self. There may be recognition of the inappropriateness of previous actions which can cause guilt as they realise the impact of their behaviour.
6. Depression can occur from a general lack of motivation and sense of confusion. Pupils can be unsure as to what will happen after transition which can impact on their sense of self and identity.

7. Disillusionment resulting from the awareness that a person's values, beliefs and goals are incompatible with those in the new system (i.e. after transition).
If this occurs people can often become withdrawn, unfocused and increasingly dissatisfied. Some pupils can become disengaged and withdrawn from secondary school as their experience is very different than that of their primary school, for example, their relationship with teachers changes.
8. Hostility arises when previous ways of operating in a system are no longer successful and prove to be a failure. Here, people often behave in the same manner in their new system as they did in their previous system. However, within the new system they fail to achieve a successful outcome. Many pupils experience a 'drop in attainment' within the first few months of secondary school.
9. Denial is defined by a lack of acceptance of any change and denial that there will be any significant impact on the individual. Here, people act as if the change has never occurred, using their old practices from their previous system. For example, research has shown the pupils who present with behavioural difficulties in primary school are more likely to become at risk of exclusion within secondary school (Anderson et al., 2000).

People usually experience the nine stages in a linear fashion, although depending on their individual self-perception, locus of control and previous experiences, a person can transcend through all stages quite quickly or rather slowly. As it has been previously noted throughout this literature review, the degree to which a transition adversely affects a person's psychological well-being is influenced by various factors, such as; prior information and appropriate support and being prepared for

the anticipated changes. It must be acknowledged that even though this model is popular within the social and occupational psychology spheres, it has not undergone any formal testing. Although, it could be argued, that this model does appear to be a useful way of conceptualising and understanding the emotional impact secondary transition can have on pupils' lives.

2.10 Systematic Literature Review Exploring Pupils' Experiences of Transition

A systematic literature review exploring pupils' experiences of transition was conducted on the EBSCO databases PsycArticles and PsycINFO. A search was also conducted using Google Scholar. The following terms were used to search for relevant journal articles; 'experiences of school transition', experiences of transfer, pupils' experiences of primary and secondary transition' and 'pupils' perceptions of transition' over the period from 1990 to 2012. The studies were included if they met the following criteria;

- Studies exploring pupils' experiences/views/feelings/perception of primary to secondary transition
- Studies involving pupils attending mainstream educational settings (as opposed to special schools)
- Studies that have taken place between 1990-2012 (considering the changes to research on the topic of transition in the last twenty years)
- UK based studies

A total of just nine studies were found that met the inclusion criteria; see table on following pages summarising each study.

Table 2.10: Details of Studies obtained from a Systematic Literature Search

Title of study and Authors	Sample Size	Participant details	Design	Procedure	Analysis	Time Frame
<i>Student Experiences of Transition from Primary to Secondary School</i> – Tobbell (2003)	30	All Female Mostly white	Qualitative Methodology	Focus Groups	Thematic Analysis	End of Year 7
<i>Negotiating the Transition</i> – Graham & Hill (2003)	268(1 st questionnaire) 173(follow up questionnaire) Number of participants in focus groups not discussed	Male and Female $\frac{2}{3}$ White $\frac{1}{3}$ British Pakistani	Quantitative	Questionnaires Small Focus Groups Data from teachers and school reports	Not discussed	Longitudinal End Year 6 – Beginning Year 7
<i>Academic Performance, Transfer, Transition and Friendship: Listening to the Student Voice</i> – Demetriou, Goalen & Rudduck (2000)	Not discussed	Male and Female from Year 6, 7 & 8 Data was taken from various research projects	Not discussed	Combined various projects 'Our data base is a series of linked projects focusing on student perspectives carried out by the author and colleagues' (p.427)	Not discussed	Various time points – Year 6, Year 7 and Year 8

<i>Students' views of environment for learning from primary to the secondary school – Pointon (2000)</i>	13	Not discussed	Not discussed	Individual Interviews	Not discussed	End of Year 7
<i>Improving the Transfer to Secondary School: How Every Child's Voice can Matter – Ashton (2008)</i>	1673 (questionnaire) 3 Year 6 classes (discussion groups)	Male and Female 62% white 18% British Indian 16% British Pakistani	Mixed Methods	Multi-method study which included questionnaires using rating scales, discussion groups where the children were invited to draw and write responses to questions	Questionnaires – analysed by statistics Final open-ended question on questionnaire – analysed open coding analysis followed by the first steps of grounded theory Discussion Groups - analysed open coding analysis followed by the first steps of grounded theory	End of Year 6
<i>Gender-Related Consequences of Early School Transfer at 11+ years – Trend (2007)</i>	Not discussed	Year 6 pupils who moved to secondary school 4 weeks before their summer holidays in Year 6 (Early	Quantitative	Pre and Post transition questionnaires	Exploratory Factor Analysis	Longitudinal End of Year 6 – Beginning of Year 7

		Transfer Scheme)				
<i>Transition Matters: Pupils Experiences of the Primary-Secondary School Transition in the West of Scotland and Consequences for Well Being and Attainment – West, Sweeting & Young (2010)</i>	Over 2000 pupils	Male and Female	Quantitative	Questionnaires Mini-interviews	Statistics	Longitudinal Primary School – Year 6 Secondary School – Year 8 Leaving Secondary School – Aged 18/19 years
<i>Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school: Perceptions of pupils, parents and teacher – Zeedyk, Gallacher, Henderson, Hope, Husband & Lindsay (2003)</i>	192 pupils in Year 6 Primary School 128 pupils in Year 7 Secondary School 119 parents of Primary School pupils 11 Primary School Teachers 19 Secondary School Teachers	48% Female 52% Male	Qualitative	Open-ended questionnaires	Descriptive Content Analysis	One time event – mixed depending on participants
<i>Assessing pupil concerns about transition to secondary school – Rice, Frederickson & Seymour (2011)</i>	147 pupils in Year 6 Primary School 263 pupils in Year 7 Secondary School	Male and Female 84% White British/Irish 10% Asian Background 2% Mixed Race	Quantitative	Self Report Questionnaires – ‘School Concern Questionnaire’	Statistics – Factor Analysis	End Year 6 – Beginning Year 7

From analysing the table above, it is clear that there is limited research exploring children's experiences of transition, particularly within the UK. Of the nine studies a range of designs were employed: qualitative (Tobbell, 2003), quantitative (Graham & Hill, 2003; Rice et al. 2011; Trend, 2007; West et al., 2010) and mixed methods (Ashton, 2008). Half of the studies failed to discuss participants' details and sample sizes and how the data the researchers obtained was analysed, making associations between these studies complex. Overall, all of the studies used a broad range of measures for exploring children's views and perceptions about transition, making more precise comparisons between the different studies difficult.

Findings from studies exploring pupils' anxieties during transition are consistent across the board (Ashton, 2008; Graham & Hill, 2003; Rice et al. 2011; West et al. 2010; Zeedyk et al., 2003;). The findings suggest that bullying is a major concern for pupils prior to transition, followed by a fear of getting lost, increased work load and peer relationships.

The four studies (Graham & Hill 2003; Rice et al. 2011; Trend 2007; West et al. 2010) that explored pupils' experiences over a period of time (pre and post transition) showed that the majority of children's anxieties decrease as they become more familiar with their new secondary school. Zeedyk et al. (2003) findings indicated that the majority of pupils reported secondary school to be better than they previously expected. On the whole, these studies reveal a positive picture of children's experiences of transition.

Rice et al. (2011) study indicated that pupils presenting with high levels of anxiety prior to transition reported a reduced like of secondary school and a reduced trust and respect for their new teachers.

There is a variety of timings within the academic year of when each of the studies were conducted. Four studies adopted a longitudinal approach (Graham & Hill, 2003; Rice et al. 2011; Trend, 2007; West et al. 2010), two studies collected data from the pupils at the end of Year 7, the end of their first year in secondary school (Pointon, 2000; Tobbell, 2003) and one study explored pupils' views prior to transition when the pupils were in Year 6 (Ashton, 2008). It could be argued that collecting data at the end of Year 7 is too late as many of all pupils by that period have settled in well to their secondary school and may forget some of the feelings and thoughts they experienced during their own transition. The pupils' reports are now not only retrospective but also representative and constructed within the context of their present situation. Similarly, interviewing children prior to transition does not capture the full picture of a child's experience of the move to secondary school.

Comparable to the current research, Rice et al. (2011) conducted the second part of their research in the autumn term of Year 7 when the pupils were still adjusting to their new school.

Tobbell's (2003) study appears to be the most comparable with this current research. Although, one must be critical about the methods undertaken within Tobbell's study. All the pupils that participated in the study were female. Previous research examining gender in relation to transition presents a mixed picture. The majority of current research indicates that females experience higher rates of anxiety than boys both pre and post transition (Anderson et al., 2000; Trend, 2007). Girls tend to place extra emphasis and importance on peer relations than boys do, they can find the transition period difficult as it may cause disruptions to their friendship and peer

groups. Therefore, it could be argued that the data is somewhat skewed before the study even began as it fails to consider to experiences of male students. Thus, the study does not produce a holistic picture of all 'student' experiences during transition.

Tobbell's study is the only piece of research adopting a purely qualitative approach exploring pupils' experiences. The other studies focus on quantitative measures investigating attainment, well-being, learning environment, gender issues, friendship and academic performance in relation to transition. These research areas have been influenced by the researchers themselves, i.e. they have not developed organically through pupil's data. This indicates that current UK research on the primary-secondary transition has largely failed to focus in detail on the in-depth experiences of transition itself. Therefore, there is a gap in the current literature for researchers to pay attention to the experiences of transition.

Analysis of all the studies' findings indicated that it is crucial that primary and secondary schools, policy and decision makers learn from the research exploring children's views and experiences of transition to improve the transition from primary to secondary school for all children. These studies highlight the importance of involving students directly in decision and policy making about supporting them during the secondary transition.

The participants within the studies mentioned above were not identified as being vulnerable around the time of transition. It is well documented that a minority of pupil's are vulnerable to negative outcomes during the transition period (Galton et al., 1999). None of these studies explored the experiences of vulnerable pupils during transition. This is an important area of research, particularly given the findings that certain groups of children are particularly vulnerable at transition. Also it is

important to note that despite the growing concerns about anti-social behaviour among vulnerable children and young people (summer 2011 riots) and the implications for disengagement from education, vulnerable children's experiences of transition has not featured in the primary-secondary transition research within the UK.

2.11 Support for Children through Transition

In recent years, there has been a notable shift towards the implication of social and emotional curriculum. The last Labour government promoted the *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) (DfE, 2010) curriculum which encouraged children to develop their emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence (EI) begins with the ability for recognising one's own and other's emotions, and with this increased awareness one is better able to manage and control their own emotions (Campbell & Ntobedzi, 2007). SEAL did not primarily focus on transition however the curriculum explored various themes that could be associated with transition, such as, new beginnings, relationships and changes.

Jordan, McRorie and Ewing (2010) conducted research exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance during the primary to secondary school transition. The findings promoted the implementation of such EI curriculums in primary schools to support pupils with their transition. It was also found that such curriculums are likely to help males more than females to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school. It is important to note that this research used only quantitative methods to explore the affects of EI and academic performance during transition. The children's experiences and views of their own transition were not discussed nor investigated in that research.

From my experience working within educational settings, I have observed many different strategies aimed at improving the transition between primary and secondary school. In some schools information about individual pupils is passed from primary to secondary to ensure that pupil's needs are identified prior to their attendance at their new secondary and that plans can be made to support the transfer and their ongoing transition into secondary school. In most schools the year 6 pupils often visit their new secondary school at an 'open day' prior to transition. Much research has shown this experience to be very positive and lessens pupils' anxieties about transition (Ofsted, 2002). Evidence from the 'Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation' study (ORACLE) noted that this was the most successful approach to decreasing stress and anxiety in pupils prior to their transition (Galton et al., 2000).

Galton et al., (2000) noted that schools have made a significant improvement to the transition process and have succeeded in reducing the levels of stress and anxiety of their pupils. It is essential that schools recognise that the transition process, is that, a process, not a single one off event (Sanders et al., 2005) and that careful planning, academic preparation and pastoral support for pupils are crucial factors for a successful transition (Anderson et al., 2000).

2.12 Systematic Literature Review Exploring Children's Experiences of Transition Support

Not only did this research explore vulnerable pupils' experiences of transition, it is also explored these pupils' experiences of a Transition Project designed to support them as they move to secondary school. Therefore, it is important to examine previous literature on transition support and intervention programmes.

A second systematic review was conducted on the EBSCO databases PsycArticles and PsycINFO. A search was also conducted using Google Scholar. The following terms were used to search for relevant journal articles; 'transition intervention', 'transfer support programme', 'primary-secondary transition support' over the period from 1990 to 2012. The studies were included if they met the following criteria;

- Studies that focused on supporting transition to secondary school
- Studies involving pupils attending mainstream educational settings (as opposed to special schools)
- Studies that have taken place between 1990-2012 (noting the changes to research on transition in the last twenty years)
- UK based studies

A total of just three studies were found to meet the inclusion criteria (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012; Shepherd & Roker, 2005; Qualter, Whitely, Hutchinson & Pope, 2007).

The National Pyramid Trust developed an intervention to support withdrawn and vulnerable children during the time of their transition, on the basis that these vulnerable children may find the move to secondary school difficult (Shepherd & Roker, 2005). This research was detailed and explored mainly quantitatively the perceptions of the children in the programme, parents, teachers and the intervention workers. They used data collected from pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires to evaluate the programme. The results showed that children who took part in the programme were very positive about it. Many of the children reported increases in self-confidence and self-esteem. It was noted, as described in many other studies, children had a wide range of anxieties about moving to secondary

school, including being bullied, getting lost in their new school, making new friends, getting into trouble, and coping with the increased workload. After participating in the programme, the majority of children stated that they no longer had any specific concerns about attending secondary school. The authors concluded;

The data suggests that the Pyramid Clubs had a positive impact on a range of factors, including how the children felt about going to secondary school, how they felt about their life at the time, how easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school and how scared they were about being bullied in secondary school. (p.64).

Although this research was extremely detailed and thorough, there was only a very small qualitative aspect of this study, where pupils participated in focus groups to share their experiences of the programme. Exactly how this qualitative data was analysed was not discussed. Considering these pupils were originally identified as being 'vulnerable', withdrawn and shy, I believe the use of focus groups may not be all that appropriate in this type of research, as some pupils might have had difficulty expressing themselves and speaking openly in a group environment. Even though it is more time consuming, interviewing shy and withdrawn pupils on a one-to-one basis allows them the opportunity to express their opinions without having to worry about what the other pupils would think. Within this current research, pupils were interviewed individually to ensure that they felt comfortable expressing themselves without they worry of what their peers thought.

Bloyce and Fredrickson (2012) assessed the effectiveness of a brief transition intervention programme delivered over a six week period, which supported pupils that had been identified as vulnerable during the secondary school transition. The authors used pre and post (transition) measures with the selected group of pupils and a control group to assess the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing specific anxieties and adjustment problems. The findings indicated that pupils who

had been identified as vulnerable experienced higher levels of anxiety in relation to transition. The findings also demonstrated that the pupils who received the intervention showed a greater reduction in school concerns prior to transition than the control group. The authors concluded that the findings of their study are 'consistent with previous research which indicated that the majority of studies of specific transfer support interventions showed positive effects and that concerns targeted by interventions do reduce' (p.13). Although the authors conducted thorough research using pre and post measures to examine the effectiveness of the intervention programme, again they failed to explore the pupils own thoughts and feelings about the intervention itself. It could be suggested that listening to the views of children about an intervention they had participated in is crucial for the continued and future development and expansion of the intervention programme.

Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson & Pope (2007) conducted a study examining whether an intervention programme delivered to Year 7 pupils was effective at increasing the pupils' Emotional Intelligence (EI) competencies and sense of self-worth and in turn lessen the negative outcomes of transition. The details of the intervention programme discussed in the article are vague. Relevant details such as who delivered the programme, how long it ran for and the actual content are not addressed. The findings of the study suggested that the intervention programme increased pupils' EI score. The authors concluded that this study 'adds strength to the argument that school-based programmes can be effective in ameliorating the negative effects associated with transition' (p. 91). Similar to Bloyce and Fredrickson (2012) study, the authors did not investigate the views of the pupils who participated in the intervention programme.

2.13 Lack of Research exploring Vulnerable Pupils' Experiences

As noted previously in Chapter 1, it is of the up most importance to listen to and include children's views in matters that affect their lives. Examining the research from the systematic literature reviews conducted, it is clear that there is a wide variety of literature exploring transitional experiences. However, none of the studies discussed investigated identified 'vulnerable' pupils experiences of transition. Whilst it has been acknowledged that the term 'vulnerable' used within this research is a varied and broad term, not one of the studies mentioned included participants that were on the SEN register, disabled, identified as having learning and/or behavioural difficulties and mental health issues. This is not at all surprising. Tisdall and Davis (2004) highlighted that vulnerable and disabled individuals are less likely to be included in research. It is vital for vulnerable groups to be included in research in order to represent the views of the whole of society. It has previously been established that vulnerable groups have clear, strong views about issues and need the opportunity to express these (Kelly, 2005). Following on from the Children's Act (2004) and the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) there has been a torrent of initiatives worldwide involving hearing children's views in matters that concern them, for example; The Children's and Young People's Unit (2001) and The 2012 Irish Children's Referendum concerning the rights of listening to children. These range from formal procedures, often taking a rights emphasis (UNICEF, 2004), through to the development of children as participant or co-researchers and their involvement in national and local evaluations of their provision, for example NECF (2004) in the UK. These schemes are worldwide and many have included hearing the views of children with learning difficulties and disabilities (Scope Services, 2002). Even with these initiatives, research exploring pupils' experiences

of transition has failed to include the views of vulnerable pupils. This research will strive to ensure that vulnerable pupils' voices can be listened to and heard.

2.14 Current Research

2.14.1 Research Aims

Overall, this literature review indicated that the majority of pupils make a successful transition and settle well into secondary school (Alston et al., 1985). Although research has highlighted that there are some pupils who are more vulnerable than others during the transition period and therefore are more likely to experience negative outcomes as a result of a poor transitional experience (Anderson et al., 2000).

The literature review has demonstrated that there appears to be a gap in the literature which explores pupils' experiences of transition using in depth qualitative measures. Similarly, current research examining the effectiveness of intervention programmes has failed to explore the pupils' experiences, thoughts and feelings of the support programme they participated in.

Thus, it is clear that there were several key points for this research to address. The main aim of this current research was therefore to explore in depth the lived transitional experiences of vulnerable pupils and their experiences of a Transition Project they had participated in whilst in Year 6.

The purpose of this research was to explore the pupils' who took part in the Transition Project (2010-2011) experiences and perceptions of their transition from primary to secondary school and their experiences of the Transition Project. It was

hoped that the information collected can further increase professionals' understanding of transition and help the members of the Transition Project continue to enhance, expand and develop the project.

It was hoped that this research would contribute an understanding to the transitional experiences of vulnerable children, so that professionals and schools can expand and improve their practices in supporting vulnerable children through transition. The data gathered from the pupils about their experiences of the Transition Project will inform stakeholders (members of the Transition Project Team and the Local Authority which funds the Project) on how to improve and develop the Project further.

2.14.2 Research Questions

The key questions that arose from this literature review were;

- What are vulnerable pupils' experiences of Transition?
- What are the vulnerable pupils' experiences of the Transition Project?

Due to the research questions being qualitative in nature, the methods adopted by this research were also qualitative. This will be further discussed within Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3. Chapter Overview

The main aims and objectives of the current research were to explore the pupils' experiences of transition and investigate their experiences of the Transition Project.

The two research questions were:

- What are vulnerable pupils' experiences of Transition?
- What are the vulnerable pupils' experiences of the Transition Project?

In this chapter methodological issues and practices are discussed. Theory of research, ontological and epistemological position will be examined and this position will influence the methods adopted and data collection.

This research involved working directly with vulnerable pupils, therefore the methods adopted which took some of the pupil's difficulties into consideration to help obtain their views are mentioned.

To conclude the final part of this chapter will consider ethical issues taken into account for this research. It will focus on the ethical issues of working with vulnerable children, obtaining informed consent both from the participant and their parents or guardians and the power imbalance that may exist between the adult researcher and the child participant. As I was known to each participant prior to this research, participant and researcher potential bias is also discussed in relation to how this relationship may influence the research.

Ethical approval for the current research was agreed in April 2011 (Appendix 5).

3.1 Purpose of Research

The main purpose of this research was to explore pupils' experiences of their own transition to secondary school. The research also explored their experiences of the Transition Project. This research was exploratory in nature.

The key reason this research was exploratory in nature was that no previous research has been conducted about the transitional experiences of the vulnerable pupils' who participated in the Transition Project. Also little is known too about these pupils' experiences of the Transition Project itself. Quinn Patton(2002) stressed that 'in new fields of study where little work has been done, few definitive hypotheses exist and little is known about the nature of the phenomenon, qualitative inquiry is a reasonable beginning point for research' (p.193). Robson (2002) noted that the purpose of exploratory research is to discover in detail what is happening during a specific event or situation by asking questions. Exploratory research allows the researcher access to participant's views, ideas, thoughts and beliefs about particular phenomena. This type of research allows the researcher opportunities to assess and seek new insights into phenomena.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

As this research explored detailed individual experiences of transition and of the Transition Project, the research adopted an idiographic stand point and data was collected and analysed using qualitative methodology. The research was primarily phenomenological, due to the fact that it explores the individual participants' account of reality (i.e. their experiences of their own transition and their experiences the

Transition Project) rather than an objective reality (i.e. mine or others' perceptions). Therefore, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data collected (this will be further discussed later in the chapter).

3.2.2 Rationale for Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

When considering the analytical methodology of this research other types of analysis were considered. I contemplated using Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse the data. However IPA was considered the most appropriate method of analysis as it fitted the aims and research questions of the research.

Willig (2008) reported that Discourse Analysis (DA) is concerned with how people use language and the effect of language on relationships. It moves beyond content and examines its orientation. DA explores how the language people use can position people in society and produce peer/power relationships (Willig, 2008).

Thematic Analysis (TA) is known as one of the most commonly used methods of qualitative analysis (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Similarly to IPA, TA requires the researcher to identify a number of themes which reflect the original data. This process usually involves coding the data. On the basis of these codings, the researcher attempts to identify themes that relate to the data. I considered using TA for the following reasons; TA is flexible and is regarded as a useful research tool that can provide a rich and detailed account of data (Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

This current research explored a lived experience (transition and experiences of a transition project), neither TA nor DA examine experiences to the depth and complexity as IPA. TA and DA were not considered to be an appropriate method of

analysis for the current research because of their limited interpretative power as neither method is based in an existing theoretical framework where the analytic claims are made (such as hermeneutics of suspicion; which involves deeper interpretations to challenge surface accounts of the data) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). TA has often been criticised as purely a description of an event. In contrast, IPA explores people's understanding and perceptions of reality in great detail, to get a greater understanding of a particular phenomenon (McLeod, 2001). TA has also being criticised due to its lack of clarity and agreement about the procedures researchers undertake while analysing their data. TA has received very little detailed attention and there are a limited number of accounts of how exactly to carry out TA. Therefore this type of method is not easily accessible to qualitative research beginners. As I was new qualitative analysis, it was considered appropriate to use a method of analysis that not only explored the experiences of participants but also provided a structure of how to conduct such analysis (i.e. a step-by-step process, Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.3 Overview of IPA Methodology

Jonathon Smith is the pioneer of IPA research. He developed this type of analysis in the 1990s as 'a qualitative approach to psychology which was grounded in psychology' (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p.180). IPA has widely been used in research throughout many psychological domains, such as social, counselling and health psychology (Smith, 2004).

IPA adopts a phenomenological approach. The primary aim of IPA is to explore how people make sense of lived experiences in their social and personal worlds. Eatough & Smith (2008) noted that due to IPAs exploration of the lived experiences and the examinations of making sense of such experiences, IPA's theoretical underpinnings

are related to phenomenology (personal lived experiences created by individuals' relationships to the world and others) and hermeneutics (theory of interpretation).

The phenomenological facet of IPA allows for a thorough and detailed exploration into lived experiences drawing on the philosophical work of Husserl (1970), Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Sarte (1956). However, this account of lived experiences is not purely descriptive in nature. IPA also employs hermeneutic phenomenology related to the work of Gadamer (1990), Heidegger (1962) and Schleiermacher (1998). This hermeneutic phenomenology gives way to the interpretative aspects of IPA.

Eatough & Smith (2008) stressed that IPA recognises that an individual's experiences cannot be accessed directly by researchers. Therefore, researchers do their best to try and understand a particular experience by investigating how the phenomena was experienced and what meaning was given to it by an individual.

As IPA is influenced by hermeneutics, it can be argued that there are different interpretative positions available to each individual researcher depending on their viewpoint. In turn, this suggests that IPA is a dynamic process where the researcher plays an active role throughout the development of the research. Researchers using IPA are inspired by the hermeneutic circle when conducting analysis, where the researcher tries to make sense of the participant trying to make sense and understand their own lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Smith (1999) argued that it is necessary to use methods which, as far as possible, facilitate participants providing their own personal stories, 'rather being influenced by the researcher's preconceptions' (p.282). Smith (1999) also noted that even though

the participants provide their own stories rather than being effected by those around them, the researcher is clearly present in the research.

Smith (1999) argued that it is important that the researcher is clear about their 'interpretative engagement' with the participants' transcripts so that they can make sense of the verbal accounts (data) being analysed. This is a 'co-constructive' approach, where the participant and the researcher are both actively involved in exploring the meaning and the understanding of this particular experience (Smith 1999).

IPA focuses on the detail of a lived experience or phenomena. It emphasises the particular as opposed to the general. It attempts to understand the specific rather than determining universal principles that apply to all. Smith (2004) noted that through consideration of the specific and the particular; researchers can try to associate with important emerging themes from the data that are prevalent to all of us, consequently taking the research closer to the universal.

IPA explores the similarities and differences of a particular lived experience; in the current research experiences of transition or experiences of a Transition Project. Each participant's account is closely analysed to provide a greater understanding of the particular phenomenon. Eatough & Smith (2008) suggested that once the researcher has finished analysing each individual case separately, a cross case analysis can be undertaken. This can highlight the parallels and diversities of the particular phenomenon as experienced by a group of individuals. Once this cross case analysis is complete, the findings are considered in relation to previous research, theories and psychological literature (Smith, 2004).

Typically most psychological research adopts a nomothetic approach, this assumes that the behaviour of a particular individual can be generalised to the whole population. In contrast, this research is idiographic in nature and therefore it was appropriate to use IPA.

Idiography is a major influence upon IPA research. It is generally concerned with the particular, as opposed to nomothetic which is concerned with generalising and making certain claims about the group or human behaviour (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Idiographic research allows the individual or small group of individuals to be studied as a unique case. This approach focuses on the interplay of factors and relationships to particular phenomena, which may be quite specific to that individual or group of individuals (Smith, 2008). The idiographic approach utilised in IPA methodology is suitable for research that contains small sample sizes (Smith, Harre, Van Langenhove, 1995). While limited in its potential for generalizability to the wider population, individual case studies, as Eiser and Twamley (1999) argued, are valuable when researching issues that cannot be fully explored in detail with a larger-scale quantitative research project.

3.4 Philosophical Underpinnings of the Current Research

It is important to be made aware of the philosophical assumptions that underpin this research. That is one's beliefs and attitudes that are all intertwined and embedded in one's thinking. These philosophical assumptions help determine how the researcher engages with, studies and understands people in their own environment. Creswell (2003) claimed that these assumptions could help explain the researcher's stance towards the nature of reality (ontology) and how the researcher knows what they know (epistemology).

The current research adopted an inductive approach, which included a critical realist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology.

3.4.1 *Epistemological Position*

Epistemology is the philosophical term for a theory of knowledge. Epistemology is also referred to as 'how we know things' (Smith, 2008) or 'how do we know what we know' (Quinn-Patton, 2002).

This research assumed an interpretive epistemological position. Phenomenology derives from a realist position and attempts to understand the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of individuals through their own language about a particular experience. Willig (2008) stated that transcendental phenomenology was devised by Husserl and is primarily concerned with the world as it presents itself to humans. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) noted that 'for psychologists, one key value of phenomenological philosophy is that it provides us with a rich source of ideas about how to examine and comprehend lived experience' (p.11). Reicher (2000) noted that while phenomenology acknowledges that it may not be possible to gain full access into an individual's life, it claims that one can gain some understanding of individual's experiences, thoughts, beliefs, opinions and actions through the language that they use.

Phenomenological research is set within the interpretivist paradigm, that explores the qualitatively different ways in which people experience something (a phenomena) or think and feel about something. As this research explored participants' experiences and was phenomenological in nature, an interpretive epistemological position was adopted. That is, reality should be interpreted through the meaning that research participants give to their experiences in their own world. The essences of inductive

research is to encourage the construction of a theory from the data collected and therefore continue to develop an increased understanding of the interpretations people make of the world around them.

As this research explored the intangible and subtle, the experiences of pupils, an interpretivist epistemology was considered to be more fitting to this piece of work. Robson (1993) noted that an interpretivist epistemology embraces the importance of things that are intangible, i.e. we cannot see, such as emotions and thoughts and how these can then influence one's behaviour. Within interpretivist epistemology it is possible to better understand human behaviour by obtaining a participant's understanding of the meaning of social actions (Robson, 1993).

3.4.2 Ontological Position

Willig (2008) noted that ontology discusses the nature of the world. 'While epistemology asks, 'How can we know?', the question driving ontology is, 'What is there to know?' (p.13). The ontological assumptions that were brought to this research were consistent with qualitative research; that is that reality is subject with multiple versions of reality existing (Creswell, 2007). This research adopted a post-positivist approach which seeks to understand human experiences (Alexander, 2006). Critical realism descends from this approach. This acknowledges that reality exists however it is important to be cautious about claiming that the reality experienced by the participants as true, due to the subjective experiences and the interpretation required to make sense of that reality. Critical realism rejects positivism's concerns with predication, quantification and measurement (Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004). Within critical realism, social phenomena can be understood but not often measured. Therefore as this research employed qualitative methods

exploring the meaning of pupils' experiences, critical realist ontology was considered appropriate for the current research.

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 Sampling

IPA researchers generally try to find a homogeneous sample for whom the research questions will be meaningful. Within IPA, participants are selected specifically because they have experienced a particular phenomena and therefore can provide the researcher with insight into their experiences of that phenomena. Thus, sampling is carried out purposively rather than through randomised probability methods.

3.5.2 Inclusion Criteria

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) argued that the main aim for the use of IPA is to explore a small homogenous group in detail. The purpose of IPA is to create some understanding of a group's experience so that further research can be carried out with other groups and eventually a broader picture of a phenomena can be gradually developed.

Within this research participants had to be Year 7 (academic year 2011-2012) pupils who had taken part in the Transition Project whilst they were in Year 6 (academic year 2010-2011). Their participation in the Transition Project indicated that each pupil had been identified by their primary school as being 'vulnerable' and potentially susceptible to negative outcomes throughout the period of transition.

Some of the participants in the Transition Project presented with speech and language and social and communication difficulties. Therefore in order to ensure inclusion and that an adequate amount of data was collected appropriate measures

were taken, through the use visual aids and prompts, so that the participants could communicate effectively with me. This will be addressed further on in the chapter. I had discussions with other members of the Transition Project about the pupils with communication difficulties and considered how to make the appropriate adjustments so that they could be included in the research.

Within this research, the homogenous aspect of the group of participants was that each of the participants had taken part in the Transition Project whilst they were in Year 6.

It is important to note that each of the participants was referred to the project for different reasons and concerns. Each of the participants had different levels of need. It is impossible to obtain a truly homogenous sample as no two individuals are the same. Smith (2004) noted that the purpose of IPA is to explore a group's (who have something in common – in this research, participation in the Transition Project) experiences of a phenomena. Therefore it was considered appropriate to recruit the pupils who had previously participated in the Transition Project.

3.5.3 Recruitment Process

16 Year 6 pupils took part in the individual strand of the Transition Project 2010-2011. All 16 pupils' families were contacted by post. This postal package included an information sheet for parents and guardians (Appendix 3) explaining the purpose of the research and why that particular pupil was chosen. A consent form was also included for the parents or guardians to sign if they wished their child to participate in the research (Appendix 4). There was a participant information sheet (Appendix 1) and a participant consent form (Appendix 2) included also. The participant information sheet explained the research to the pupil using 'child-friendly' language.

The parents/guardians were asked to return the parent/guardian consent form and the participant consent form to the Educational Psychology Service (stamped addressed envelopes were provided) indicating their decision as to whether they wished their child would participate in the research or not.

Two forms were returned to the Educational Psychology Service, providing a 12.5% response rate. Previous studies with vulnerable children and hard to reach families (Stalker & Connors, 2003) similarly report finding it difficult to recruit children and young people to their research. In the same way this research had a low initial response rate. After discussions with a research tutor, it was decided to telephone the families of the pupils who had not yet responded to enquire as whether they wished their child to participate in the research and to answer any potential questions they may have had. It was then discovered that at least 3 of the families had moved house and out of the borough. Another 2 families had had their phones disconnected and were not able to be contacted. I managed to contact the 9 remaining families and was informed that 5 of the families did not wish their children to participate in the research. The other 4 families expressed an interest and were then further encouraged to send the consent forms back to the Educational Psychology Service. Once the signed consent forms arrived, the pupils' secondary schools were contacted to arrange a time and date for the interview to take place.

3.5.4 Sample size

Six participants took part in this research. As IPA research is qualitative in nature and involves the detailed case-by-case analysis of transcripts, small sample sizes are recommended in order for the researcher to explore cases in greater detail (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggested that 'between

three and six participants can be a reasonable sample size' for research using IPA (p. 51). The authors also stated that successful analysis requires time, reflection and dialogue and usually larger sample sizes tend to inhibit all of these qualities of IPA research. Collins and Nicolson (2002) noted that analysis of larger data sets can often result in the loss of 'potentially subtle inflections of meaning' (p.626). Smith et al. (2009) advocated that doctorate students should aim for between four and ten interviews but that as IPA is concerned with the detailed accounts of individual experiences, smaller samples can often yield more thorough and complete analyses. It is believed that this amount of data should produce enough information about similarities and differences between participants without it being too overwhelming for the researcher. In accordance with these recommendations 6 participants were interviewed in this study.

3.5.5 Participant Details

All the participants in the current research were interviewed within their first 3 months in Year 7 at secondary school. Brief details of each participant's circumstances in a short vignette can be found in Chapter 4. Demographic details that are directly relevant to the research can be found in Table 3.5 below.

It is important to note that most of the participants were in different primary schools from each other and attended different secondary schools. Ryan and Mandy attended the same primary school but were in different Year 6 classes. Lizzie and Mandy now attend the same secondary school but are in different year groups. All of the other participants transferred to secondary school without their peers from the Transition Project.

Table 3.5: Participant's Demographic Details

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Home Language	Primary School Type	Secondary School Type
Ollie*	11	Male	White British	Hebrew and English	Co-educational	Single Sex Secondary School
Sarah	11	Female	White Portuguese	Portuguese and English	Co-educational	Co-educational
Lizzie	12	Female	White British	English	Co-educational	Co-educational
Mandy	11	Female	White British	English	Co-educational	Co-educational
Jackson	12	Male	British of Afro-Caribbean origin	English	Co-educational	Single Sex Secondary School
Ryan	12	Male	White British	English	Co-educational	Co-educational

*All names have been changed to preserve anonymity

3.5.6 Participants' Activities within the Transition Project

As noted in Chapter 1, the Transition Project has two strands to address needs on an individual pupil and whole class level. Each of the participants took part in the

individual strand. It is important to note that this current research explored the pupils' experiences of the individual strand of the Transition Project.

The table below indicates the different components of the individual strand and whole class programme of the Transition Project delivered in the final year of primary school.

Table 3.5.1: Activities undertaken in the Transition Project

Strand	Component	Time Frame
1. Individual Strand	Training on the Transition Project to each school.	Autumn Term
	Referral to Transition Project	Autumn Term
	Child meets with member of Transition Project (to explain the project and set some targets to work towards)	Autumn Term
	1 st Child Centred Review (Transition Review) with the Transition Project member, child, his/her family members and school staff – exploring concerns and developing an action plan of how to support the child as they make their transition at home and at school	Spring Term
	Action Plan is put in place at school and at home	Spring – Summer Term
	Transition Project Groups – run by the Transition Project members for 5 weeks, promoting the development of social skills, emotional resilience and self esteem building	Summer Term
	2 nd Child Centred Review with the Transition Project member, child, his/her family members, primary school staff and a staff member of the secondary school that the child will be attending – exploring how the secondary school can support the child	Summer Term
2. Whole Class Programme	Year 6 Teacher delivers the whole class programme to the Year 6 class. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes and New Beginnings • Relationships • Organisational Issues • Bullying • Asking for Help • Meeting Year 7 pupils – a question and answer session • Secondary School Visit 	8 weeks over the summer term

3.5.7 Researcher's Role with each Participant

It is important to note that I worked individually and within a group setting with each of the participants. I attended and facilitated Jackson's and Ollie's Transition Reviews. The nature of my work with each participant depended on their level of need and the confidence the primary school had in supporting each pupil. The table below illustrates the amount of involvement I had with each of the participants prior to this research.

It is also important to note that each of the pupils participated in the same Transition Project Group.

Researcher bias will be discussed further on in this chapter.

Table 3.5.2: The Nature of the Researcher's Involvement with each Participant

Participant's Name	Nature of my Involvement
Ollie	Attended and Facilitated Transition Review 3 individual sessions (30 mins each) – introducing the project and focusing on self-esteem building Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks
Sarah	1 individual session (30 min) – introducing the project Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks
Lizzie	2 individual sessions (30 mins each) – introducing the project and resource exploring Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks
Mandy	2 individual sessions (30 mins each) – introducing the project and resource exploring

	Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks
Jackson	3 individual sessions (30 mins each) – introducing the project and exploring anger management issues Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks
Ryan	1 individual session (30 mins) – introducing the project Transition Project Group (1 hour) – run for 5 weeks

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 *Research Time-Line*

Ethical approval for the current research was agreed in April 2011 (Appendix 5).

Participants were recruited using a series letters and telephone calls to their parents/guardians from September 2011 to November 2011. All the data was collected by December 2011. The table below outlines the time-line of the research.

Table 3.6: Time-Line of Data Collection

Procedure	Date
UEL Ethics Approval Requested	November 2010
UEL Ethics Approval Granted	April 2011
Participants Required (letters and telephone calls)	September 2011-November 2011
Data Collection Period (Interviewing Participants in Secondary School)	October 2011-December 2011

3.6.2 Interviews

The purpose of all research interviews is to obtain information of some kind.

Research has shown that conducting qualitative interviews with children and young people can yield rich, deep accounts that can then lead to the development of new knowledge not previously known by adults (Mayall, 2000). Exploratory methods were adopted for this research; therefore exploratory interviews were used to collect data.

The purpose of exploratory interviews are essentially heuristic in nature, that is, to develop ideas and research hypotheses rather than gather facts and statistics.

These types of interviews are concerned with trying to understand how people think and feel about a topic being researched. In this research, the participants were asked about their personal experiences of a transition project and their own transition. Explorative interviews were considered appropriate to use in this research as they allowed me to explore the participants' experiences of a phenomena (Transition Project and their own transition).

An exploratory interview has been described as essentially a one way process (Oppenheim, 2000). If the interview became more of a two way progress (similar to a genuine conversation) it would lose much of its value because of the biases introduced by the interviewer. Each of the participants were informed about the one-way process at the start of their interview.

R: So I am very interested in your experience of it of moving to secondary school and of the Transition Project, there are no right or wrong answers.....Mmmm, it may seem like a bit of an odd conversation, I know at the moment I am doing all the talking, but it may change where I am asking*

questions, and then you might be doing most of the talking but that's totally fine, if that is ok with you?

Taken from Participant 2 (Sarah) Transcript

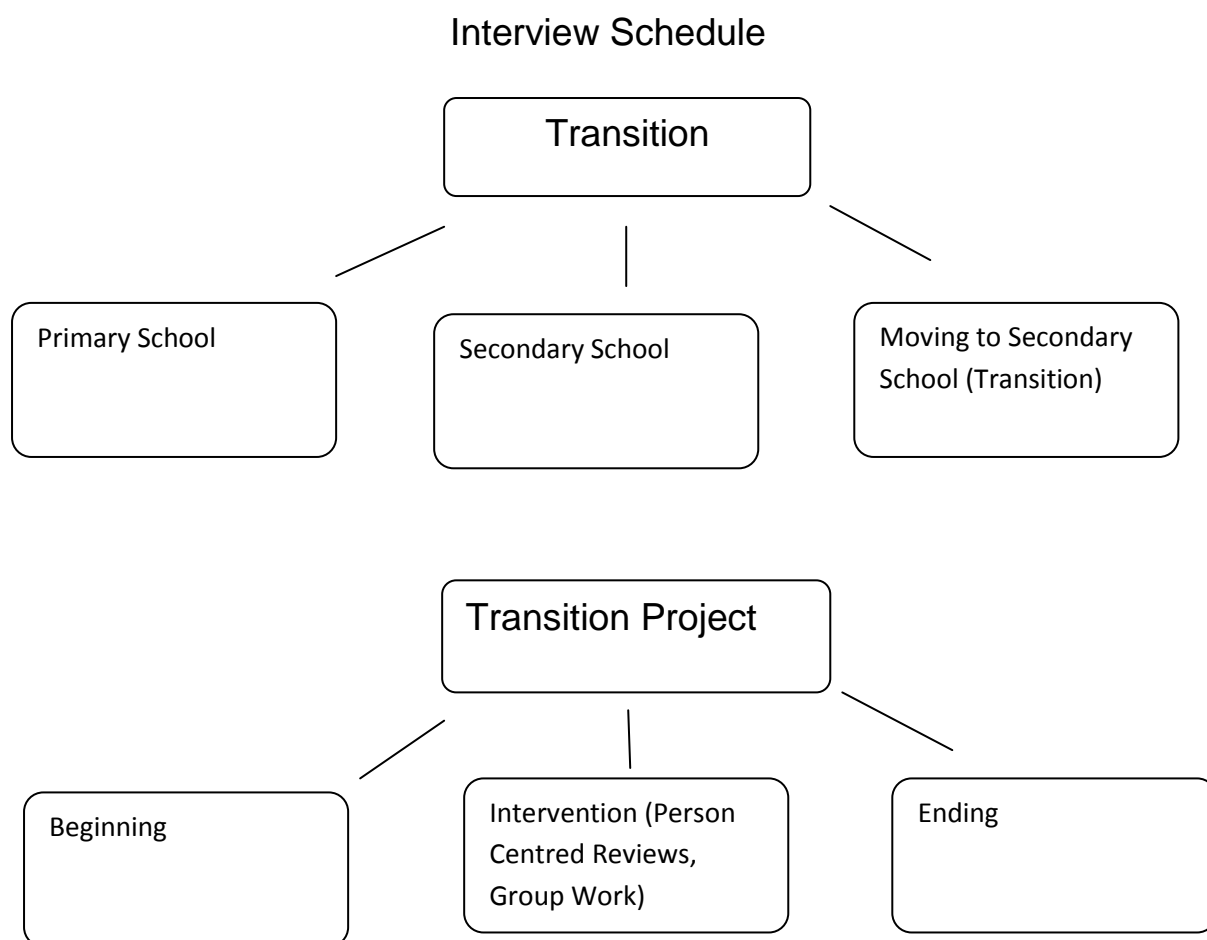
*R – Researcher

Quinn Patton (2002) stated that 'the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer' (p.341). Oppenheim (2000) noted that interviewing, unlike other research methods requires strong interpersonal skills, such as putting the participant at ease, the use of active listening and providing support and empathy without introducing interview bias. It is my opinion that as Trainee Educational Psychologist, I am well suited to conduct in-depth research interviews as I am trained in and regularly practice these important interviewing skills.

3.6.3 Semi-structured Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was used in this research. It was developed to ensure the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each participant. This schedule provided me with particular aspects of the phenomena (transition project and participants' own transition) which related to the research questions, where I was free to explore deeper, probe and ask relating questions that would highlight and examine that particular aspect. The diagram below illustrates the different aspects of the phenomena explored.

Figure. 3.6 – Diagram of Interview Schedule



Using semi-structured interviews allowed me the opportunity to build a conversation within a particular aspect of the phenomena (for example, exploring how a participant felt after the project had finished). These interviews also allowed me to word questions spontaneously and explore different aspects of the phenomena that the participants discussed. It is believed this approach created a relaxed atmosphere during the interview where the participants felt more at ease. Another advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that it allowed me to decide how best to use the limited time available during an interview.

Furthermore, the interview schedule (see appendix 15) was constructed in an open-ended manner and used flexibly in the interviews themselves in order to encourage

participants to convey what was important to them regarding the topic with minimal influence from the researcher. Each interview began in the same manner. I thanked the participant for agreeing to meet with me and explained that if they no longer felt that they wished to participate they could leave at any time. I reminded them about the transition project and assured them that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained at all times, unless they said something which indicated they were being harmed in some way. The interview schedule was divided into 4 parts; the introduction, discussion about transition, conversation on the transition project and conclusion/debrief. Each participant was asked the same opened ended questions and, based on their answers, they were then asked individual follow-up questions.

Each interview lasted between 35-45 minutes depending on the participant. Each interview was recorded with participants' and their parents/guardians consent on a Sony Digital Voice Recorder. The participants were verbally debriefed and thanked for their participation at the end of the interview. The interview recordings were uploaded onto my personal computer using NCH software. NCH software provides a wide range of software programmes for transcription. NCH software was chosen for this research as the brand is well known and highly regarded within the audio software market (NCH website, 2012) and it was considered appropriate for this research. These recordings were stored in a password protected file. They will be destroyed when the research and assessment are fully completed.

Each transcript was then transcribed verbatim using NCH software 'Express Scribe'. An example of a transcript can be found in Appendix 8. The transcripts were then analysed using IPA.

3.6.4 *Interviewing Children*

The importance of listening effectively to children's views was previously discussed in Chapter 2. Vulnerable children and children with SEN have been excluded from research in the past due to concerns about their level of engagement and understanding.

Armstrong and Galloway (1996) stressed that in order to fully obtain a child's perspective it is crucial that the researcher develop the skills of communication meaning to the child, and also of understanding the meaning the child places on events in their lives. Armstrong and Galloway (1996) noted that if the researcher is unsuccessful, the child's perspective will be distorted with adult perceptions.

Within this research the method selected had to be suitable to allow the pupils' tell their story of their experiences. The majority of previous qualitative research has used qualitative methods successfully with adults. One of the concerns within this research was to choose a method where the pupils were able and allowed to speak freely about a potentially sensitive subject. Another concern within this research was to choose a method which would be appropriate for vulnerable young people and in particular for some who had speech, language and communication difficulties.

3.6.5 *Visual Aids*

As emphasised previously in this chapter, it is of the utmost importance to include and listen to children's and young people's views about matters that affect them in their lives. Due to the nature of some of the participants speech, language and communication difficulties, visual aids and drawings were considered to be appropriate to ensure that the pupils' felt at ease and were able to communicate

effectively (Appendix 7). Research has shown that many vulnerable children and young people with special educational needs and communication difficulties are able to process visual tools and information more effectively than the spoken word (Wall, Higgins & Smith, 2005). Greig, Taylor & MacKay (2007) noted that the creative use of ability-appropriate materials such as visual aids to assist memory is in keeping with good practice for questioning children and young people.

3.6.6 Transcription

I transcribed each interview verbatim (Appendix 8). Non-verbal behaviour was noted during each interview, such as laughing, coughing, long pauses and gestures. The transcripts included all utterances, such as 'mmm', 'uh', 'umm' so that I could analysis a transcript that was as similar as possible to the original interview. Any identifying information about the participants was changed at the time of transcription, for example, if a participant mentioned a teacher's name, it was changed to Mr/Miss X. This also included other individuals that were mentioned, place names, school names or any other identifying information. This was to ensure anonymity. I took note of the pseudonym given to each participant. This information was stored separately from the research data at my home and will be destroyed once the research and assessment have been fully completed.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Conducting IPA – The Analytical Procedure

Smith and Osborn (2008) noted that IPA searches to understand the complexity and meaning of the participant's world via their story. I engaged in an interpretative relationship with each transcript of each participant. As this research was idiographic

in nature, the initial focus of the analysis was on identifying emerging themes and issues from each individual transcript. I began reading and analysing Participant 1 – Ollie’s transcript and then worked through each transcript separately in a linear fashion (participant 2, then participant 3 etc).

Each transcript was read a number of times before analysis began. The recording of the interview was also listened to at this time. This was to ensure that I was fully emerged in the data. Initial hand written notes were recorded on the left margin of the transcript. These included commentary on the text, areas of interest, notes on the dialogue, links to the experience and initial and basic interpretations. The primary aim of this initial note taking was to ensure that I remained familiar with the text and its meaning, and could identify and bracket any biases or prejudices at this early stage (Smith & Dunworth, 2003).

Transcripts were formatted on a computer with a wide margin on the left hand side (used for descriptive notes of the experience) and a margin on the right hand side (used for interpretative sub-themes). The labels given for the emerging sub-themes were words or phrases the participant used themselves or words that I felt captured the essence of the experience. During this process I read and re-read the transcript to ensure that the emerging sub-themes were closely related to the original text. The labels given to each of the emerging sub-themes were not considered to be fixed at this stage. I believed that as the analytical process moved towards a higher level of interpretation sub-theme labels would change. This process is demonstrated in Appendix 9.

The next step involved clustering sub-themes to identify main themes (Willig, 2001). During this process I used phenomenological approaches and principles, including

hermeneutics, to help comprehend each transcript. Smith (2007) acknowledged the use of hermeneutic processes for examination and interpretation. I used 'table-top analysis' to identify emerging main themes. Sub-themed labels were cut out and individually placed on flat work top. I then initially clustered together sub-themes that had apparent links between, such as '*lack of control*' and '*feeling imprisoned*' (taken from Participant 1 – Ollie's transcript). The sub-themes were then clustered into groups that appeared to be aspects of a broader category. The emerging main theme was given a label that appeared to capture the essence of that particular aspect of the experience. I created a new Word document which listed the main theme and sub-themes with relevant quotes attached (Appendix 11). Using the quotes allowed me to link the themes to the original transcript so that they could be easily traced back through the analytical process. This ensured good validity. These themes were constantly checked against the transcript to ensure they related to the participant's experience.

Once the themes, sub-themes and relating and relevant quotes from one transcript were identified and typed up in a Word file, the whole process was repeated for each transcript separately. Each transcript was treated individually, 'on its own terms, to do justice to its own individuality' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 100). I viewed and analysed each transcript while trying to bracket the themes and ideas that emerged from the previous transcripts. I was open to allow new themes to emerge with each transcript.

As this research was idiographic in nature, I decided to write-up each participant's experience of transition and the Transition Project individually. It was felt that through this method, each individual participant's voice could be heard as I was fully emerged in the data.

Once I had written up each participant's experience individually, the next stage involved looking for patterns across each transcript (the Group Analysis). A table of all the themes and relating sub-themes from each of the transcripts was produced (Appendix 12). Sub-themes that only related to one particular participant were discarded as it was believed that they did not fully represent all the participants collectively. The table of themes captured the significant aspects of the pupils' experiences. All the transcripts were viewed again to ensure that the quotes truly represented each theme identified. A new table which contained quotes relating to each of the identified themes and sub-themes was produced. This process of relating the themes to original quotes was crucial for validity as it allowed me to keep as close to the transcripts as possible when writing up the Group Analysis. I then began writing up the Group Analysis.

During the process of writing up (individual participants accounts and the group analysis), I edited some quotes to enhance the fluency of the text for the reader. Extreme care was taken to ensure that the meaning of each quote was intact so that they remained true to the original interview.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Robson (2002) noted that it is vital that all researchers give serious thought to the ethical aspects of their research. Willig (2008) informed researchers that they should be mindful and take precautions that protect their participants from any harm or loss, and they should aim to preserve their psychological well-being and dignity at all times throughout the research.

When conducting research with children and young people ethical issues must be considered, namely the child or young people's ability to provide informed consent,

obtaining parental/guardian consent, maintaining confidentiality, ensuring anonymity, and being mindful of the power differential between the child or young person and the adult researcher. When the research participants are vulnerable pupils these ethical issues are potentially heightened. Brykczynska (1989) argued that it is vital that any research conducted with children should only be done to benefit the child or benefit other children in future.

A formal application for ethical approval was made to the University of East London research ethics committee. This application form contained information regarding consent, confidentiality and potential harm or risk. These issues are further discussed below. Ethical approval was granted from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) on 12th April 2011 (Appendix 5).

3.8.1 *Consent*

Willig (2008) argued that all researchers should ensure that participants are fully informed about the research procedure and give their consent to participate in the research prior to data collection. Robson (2002) noted that in the case of legally under-aged children, the parents and guardians should be asked for consent.

Robson (2002) continued to stress that the majority of children will have a level of understanding about what the research involves and therefore they too should be asked directly for consent to participate in addition to their parents or guardians.

Researchers are now beginning to view it as good practice to also obtain the child or young person's agreement to participate (Ireland & Holloway, 1996; Lewis, 2008).

As mentioned above within the recruitment process section letters were sent to the parents and guardians of the pupils who had participated in the Transition Project 2010-2011. These letters contained information about the research for the

parents/guardians (Appendix 3), consent forms to be filled in by the parents/guardians (Appendix 4), an information sheet for the participant (Appendix 1) and a consent form to be filled in by the participant (Appendix 2). Ward (1997) noted that the information sheet needed to be appropriate for the pupil's level of ability, brief and written in a child friendly way. The information sheet covered what would happen during the research, reasons for the research, how the findings would be used, addressing confidentiality issues and the methods to be used during data collection. The participant information sheet used in this research was shown to a small group of Year 7 pupils (pupils who did not participate in this research, nor had they participated in the Transition Project) to ensure that it was age, level and ability appropriate. The consensus from this small group of Year 7 pupils was that the information sheet was easy to read and could be understood.

Only when signed parental/guardian and participant forms were received, did data collection commence. As there were concerns about parent/guardian illiteracy, I telephoned each family to discuss the research and answer any questions they may have had. This was to ensure that all parents/guardians understood the nature and process of this research before giving consent.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) noted that it is also good practice to revisit the issue of consent within the interview itself. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were asked if they still wished to be interviewed and were reminded that they could leave at any time during the interview if they wanted.

3.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Willig (2008) noted that all researchers should maintain complete confidentiality regarding any information about participants acquired during the research process.

For some researchers there is a debate as to whether children and young people should be granted the same confidentiality rights as adults. Some researchers argue that all children should be given the same degree of confidentiality as adults (Morrow & Richard, 1996), while others believe confidentiality will be broken if the child or young person discloses that they are being harmed in some way (Masson, 2004). For the purpose of this research, it was decided that if a pupil disclosed concerning information to myself, this information would then have to be told to another professional, mainly that of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator of the school. Parents/guardians and participants were informed of this procedure within the research information letters they received and the participants were reminded again at the beginning of the interview.

All data collected in this research was confidential and was not made available to anyone other than myself, a peer researcher, academic tutor and examiners. All of the interviews were transcribed by myself and verified by a peer researcher. All data, including transcripts and audiotapes, were anonymised. During the process of transcription, any personal identifying details such as names of individuals, schools, places etc were changed so that personal details of the participants were not within the transcripts. This was to ensure anonymity.

3.8.3 *Power*

Willig (2008) argued that power relations between researchers and participants are potentially more subtle within qualitative research but stresses these power relations should not be ignored or dismissed by qualitative researchers. Willig (2008) noted that within qualitative research, a close personal relationship between the researcher and participants can carry a particular risk for the abuse of trust.

O’Kane (2000) noted that power relations are one of the largest challenges to overcome when conducting research with children as often children or young people may strive to provide what they perceive to be the ‘right’ or ‘desirable’ answer.

Familiarity is a way of reducing the power imbalance between the researcher and participants, as if the researcher is familiar to the child or young person, the child or young person could feel less intimidated by the interview situation. Within this research, I was known to all of the participants as I had worked with them on the Transition Project. At the start of each interview to make the participants feel at ease, they were told that the interview is about their experiences and that there was no right or wrong answer to any of the questions asked.

R:if you say anything that mmm, that can, that somebody is able to identify you, can work out who you are, I will change it so nobody can work out who said what, ok?.....so everything will be anonymised , ok,.....so I am really interested in your experiences of it ok? The Transition Project and moving to secondary school, so there is no right or wrong answers, this is all about you.....and take your time thinking about things, there is no rush.....

Taken from Participant 5 (Jackson) Transcript

3.8.4 Potential for Harm

Given the vulnerability of the participants who participated in this research a formalised plan to prevent and address any potential distress a participant may have had during or after an interview was discussed with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of each of the secondary schools. It was thought that conversations about transition or primary school may evoke potential upsetting memories which may leave the participant feeling distressed. Measures were taken to ensure the participants felt comfortable at the beginning of the interview for example, being interviewed by somebody they knew in a familiar setting and,

discussion at the start of the interview about what would happen and what would be discussed. It was also important to assure them about anonymity and confidentiality (if appropriate). In addition the use of visual aids and the opportunity to leave the interview if they wished supported the pupils. It was agreed with each of the SENCos of the different secondary schools, that if I felt a participant became distressed during or after an interview (at the end of each interview participants were asked how they felt about talking about their transition), I would terminate the interview and destroy the data. The participant would then be debriefed (if appropriate) by myself and the SENCo. If it was deemed necessary, other agencies would have been contacted for support, such as CAMHS or the Educational Psychologist (pending parental consent) for that particular secondary school. Ongoing support would have been offered by myself if required. It was also agreed with each SENCo that each participant would have been closely monitored by the SENCo and together with other members of the teaching staff for the rest of the day following the interview to ensure emotional well-being.

3.9 Quality, Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggested that IPA researchers use Yardley's (2000) four principles for assessing the quality of their qualitative research. The first principle was sensitivity to context where Yardley (2000) argued that all qualitative researchers should be sensitive to the context of their research through being aware of socio-cultural issues, exploring existing literature and sensitively handling the data obtained from the participants. The second principle was commitment and rigour. This principle can be demonstrated in a number of ways, through the degree of attentiveness to the participant during an interview and the level of care required while the researcher analyses each case. Also the appropriateness of the sample

selected, the quality of the interview and the completeness of the analysis should all be called into question and considered. Within this research 6 pupils were purposively sampled to ensure a homogenous sample. Yardley's (2000) final two principles were transparency and coherence and the impact and importance of research. These principles note that the researcher should be clear about the methods used within the research and highlight the impact and usefulness of the research itself. A detailed description of the methods used for data collection has already been discussed. A description of the analysis employed is described later in this chapter. All four of the principles were noted while completing this research.

Willig (2008) noted that the validity of research corresponds to the degree to which it is accepted as sound, legitimate and authoritative by people with an interest in the research findings. In keeping with Yardley's (2000) third principle of assessing the quality of qualitative research, 'transparency and coherence', I noted down my own preconceptions and thoughts about the outcome of the research prior to data collection, so that I was made aware of my views from the beginning. I also kept a reflective research journal throughout the process of the research, in which my thoughts, ideas, opinions and concerns about the progress of the research are detailed. An extract from the reflective journal can be found in Appendix 13. This journal linked closely with a paper-trail which documented all stages of the analysis based on a complete set of coded transcripts and descriptions of the development of the themes and interpretations. In addition, credibility and reliability checking was carried out to increase the validity of the data analysis and research as a whole. This involved both an academic supervisor and a peer researcher analysing a sample of the transcripts to ensure that the emerging themes corresponded with those that I had identified.

Willig (2008) claimed that qualitative research is often criticised as it is less concerned with aspects of reliability as opposed to quantitative research. Willig (2008) noted the reason for this is that qualitative research explores a particular, possibly unique phenomenon or experience in great detail and therefore it does not aim to measure a particular attribute in large numbers of the population. On the other hand, some researchers (Sliverman, 1993) emphasized that if qualitative methods were applied appropriately they ought to generate results that are reliable.

Specifically, the same data when collected and analysed by two different researches would yield the same result. The reliability issues within this research were addressed through inter-rater reliability.

Assessing inter-rater reliability, whereby data (transcripts) are independently coded or analysed and the results are compared for agreement, is a recognised process in qualitative research (Willig, 2008). Inter-rater reliability checks were used within this research to promote the reliability and validity of the research itself. The following processes were carried out:

- A peer researcher read through a section of a transcript while listening to the recorded interview to ensure that the transcript corresponded to what was said during the interview. The peer researcher confirmed that my transcripts were accurate.
- The reliability issues within this research were addressed through triangulation. An academic tutor and a peer researcher analysed the same extract of a transcript. This was to ensure that the emerging themes corresponded with those that I identified and could be linked back to the text.

There was agreement between the academic tutor and peer researcher that the themes identified connected to the text.

The interpretative and individual nature of IPA suggests that other researchers may identify different themes. I was aware of this aspect of IPA but still wished for others to be able to clearly relate my themes to the original text. Both my academic supervisor and peer researcher concluded that they could understand my identified themes and associate them to the transcript.

There are many critics that are reluctant to accept the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). Other researchers question whether trustworthiness can ever be truly established within qualitative research (Sparkes, 2001). However within this research, the methodology allowed for detailed, accurate accounts, systemic and in depth analysis and reflective practice to occur. I considered issues of validity, quality and reliability prior to and in the process of conducting this research.

Therefore, it could be argued that such ways of working allowed me to provide a valid and trustworthy account of pupils' experiences of the Transition Project and of their own transition.

3.9.1 *Research Bias*

I am aware and have acknowledged the possibility of volunteer biases within the research sample. It could be suggested that of all the pupils who took part in the Transition Project only those who had positive experiences would agree to participate in the research. I have acknowledged this potential bias and was sensitive when asking questions about the project so as not to influence the participants. I stressed to each participant that there was no right and wrong answer and that they could say whatever they wished about the project.

It is important to note that each of the participants in this research was known me. I had worked individually and within a group setting with each of the participants. Participant bias was considered prior to undertaking this research. It could be argued that the participants may have felt obliged to speak positively about the Transition Project due to my presence within the interview and therefore not provide realistic accounts of their experiences. However, it was believed that due to the nature of these pupils' communication difficulties and social and emotional issues, being interviewed by a stranger would have been a stressful and possibly upsetting experience and therefore hinder the amount of rich data collected. It was thought that it would be appropriate for me to conduct the interviews as I had already developed rapport with the participants and understood the nature of their difficulties. I also understood how best to communicate with each of the participants and when to differentiate the questions to cater for each individual need.

The process of conducting research on children and young people known to researchers is not new. Altricher, Posch and Somekh (1993) encouraged teachers to carry out research within their own classrooms, to help them explore challenges and find solutions and generally become more reflective practitioners.

3.10 Reflexivity

Smith (2008) noted that reflexivity emphasises that research is the joint product of the research and researched. Reflexivity closely relates to Yardley's (2000) third principle for accessing the quality of qualitative research, 'coherence and transparency'. As qualitative research generally assumes that the researcher will influence the research, reflexivity is an important part of the transparency of the research. Many researchers argue that reflexivity is imperative throughout the

research process, so that the researcher is open and honest about their own thoughts, beliefs, prejudices, assumptions and opinions (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). It is my opinion that the element of reflexivity is more significant throughout research using IPA, as IPA stresses the notion of interpretation. Throughout this process it is important for the researcher to consider how their assumptions, thoughts, personality, cultural background, religious beliefs, socio-economic status may affect the research design, methodology and data analysis. It is important to note that no researcher can be truly objective as their assumptions, thoughts and prior experience and knowledge will affect the research itself.

Within Chapter 1, I outlined my own stance in relation to my personal, cultural and professional background. At the beginning of this chapter, I described my theoretical assumptions for this research. This has been included so that the reader can have some insight into my role throughout the research process. This research also included statements regarding reflexive bracketing throughout the data analysis process. This allows the reader to understand the extent to which I was able to acknowledge my own assumptions and bracket them.

Chapter 4 – Findings

4. Chapter Overview

This chapter explores descriptions of how the data analysis was conducted and highlights the findings. As noted previously this research employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) due to its relevance in addressing the research questions stated in Chapter 2.

Due to the extensive nature of the data provided by the participants, it was deemed necessary to prioritise the development of an account that sought to address the research questions.

The data within this chapter is presented exclusively with the interpretative analysis and without theoretical discussion or connection to the relevant literature. These elements will be discussed in the following chapter. It was decided that this approach for presenting the results was the best method of portraying the individual pupils' experiences of their own transitions and their experiences of the Transition Project. This approach would allow the reader to gain a fuller insight into the experiences of the participants as perceived by myself without complicating their experiences with psychological theory.

The group analysis (common themes that emerged from the group of participants) shall be addressed first, followed by each individual participant's analysis.

The analysis addressed the two research questions separately:

- Research Question 1 - What are vulnerable pupils' experiences of transition?

- Research Question 2 - What are the vulnerable pupils' experiences of the Transition Project?

4.1 Group Analysis

Many of the themes that emerged within the individual analysis were individual to that participant alone. However in order to determine whether there were common elements of the lived experiences of transition and the transition project, the themes that emerged from each participant were further analysed. I believed that such elements should be included as group findings as they appeared particularly important to the group as a whole and are considered to provide the reader with a deeper understanding and insight into the pupils' experiences of transition and the transition project.

4.1.1 *Research Question (RQ) 1 – Experiences of Transition*

Theme 1 – Struggling to Cope

The theme of struggle emerged in every participant's interview. It appeared predominantly more in some transcripts than others. Moving to secondary school was a great effort for each participant. Each pupil strived to make the adjustment to their new school. For some it was coping with their anxieties, for others it was saying 'goodbye' to their primary school and for all it was forming relationships with others.

Sub-theme 1a – Struggling with Anxieties

Many of the pupils experienced feelings of anxiety and even fear before their transition. Ollie found it particularly difficult to cope with his transition, '*yea I had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....hard, well hard to cope with everything*'. For some this fear related to a perception that the work in secondary school would be harder,

getting lost in the new building or having strict teachers, *'well on the first day, we got a bit lost'* (Ryan). Although the most commonly cited worry was that of bullying, *'yea because I thought I that they were going to be bullying and stuff like that'* (Sarah). For many of the pupils, the first day of secondary school was a daunting experience, *'cause I was very worried on the first day'* (Lizzie). The anticipation that secondary school was a 'scary' environment increased some of the pupils' anxiety, *'we were reading a book about it (transition) and in the book they are describing it as big and scary and all of like loads of big kids, and mmm, being bullied and all of that'* (Lizzie).

Sub-theme 1b – Struggling with Relationships

Most of the pupils' indicated an element of struggle in forming relationships with others. Both Lizzie and Jackson appear to have experienced difficulties developing relationships with the teachers of their new secondary school, *'I don't like a few teachers in this school'* (Jackson). Lizzie struggled to understand the difference of how some teachers treat pupils in secondary school compared to her primary school, *'some teachers like Mr X are really just like horrible, aarrggh, I really just don't like him'*. In contrast, Ryan enjoyed the new teacher-pupil relationships that he had developed as they allowed him to feel more secure in secondary school, *'not many people fight here but if there is one the teachers care enough to stop it and then its fine'*.

The influence of peer relationships and friendships was discussed in some form by all of the pupils, which indicates that friendships were an important factor for those experiencing transition. The absent of friendships and peer relationships was associated with a sense of struggle and a difficult transition experience for some pupils, *'well the making friends part one wasthe bad one....because I didn't know*

anybody' (Ollie). This struggle to form friendships, made some pupils feel as if they didn't fully belong in secondary school. Other pupils emphasised that their transition experiences were positively impacted on when they made friends in secondary school, *'yea.... like I felt really happy coz I made my first friends'* (Sarah), *'I feel happy here....because I like playing with my new friends'* (Mandy). Developing peer relationships and friendships positively impacts on the pupil's emotional well-being.

Sub-theme 1c – Struggling Leaving Primary School

For some pupils making the transition to secondary school made them experience feelings of loss and longing for their old primary school. Lizzie in particular struggled to come to terms with being in secondary school and having to leave her primary school in the past, *'I was happy there, I miss it obviously, but like I miss like my classmates and everything'*. Sarah also experienced feelings of longing and anger for primary school, *'well like I felt quite angry....I was like I don't want to go to secondary school'*. It is interesting to note that none of the boys spoke about feeling a sense of sadness when they left. In contrast to Lizzie and Sarah, Ryan experienced feelings of intense excitement at the prospect of leaving his primary school *"I just couldn't wait to leave and go to another school.... so I'm happy to have left that place'*. Perhaps girls experience a stronger connection with their primary schools and therefore find it harder to leave the comforts of it.

4.1.2 Theme 2- New Beginnings

An aspect of the theme 'New Beginnings' featured in all the transcripts. Some pupils embraced their transition and viewed the move to secondary school as a new opportunity to develop a new identity, hoping to change their behaviour and become somebody different. Throughout many of the transcripts, it is evident that many of the

participants experienced a great sense of relief when they discovered that their secondary school was not how they had imagined it nor what they had previously been anxious about.

Sub-theme 2a – New Identities

Many of the participants spoke about becoming somebody new and different. For some pupils who felt marginalised prior to their transition in primary school, moving to secondary school allowed them to form new identities for themselves, *'it is a new start and a chance to make new friends and be different....a different person'* (Mandy)..

Questions about identity were heightened through the pupils' experiences of transition, as they mediated different expectations about their behaviour and aspirations between their families and themselves. There appeared to be still a sense of struggle of independence for some pupils, *'I get a lift to here in the morning like in primary school but I get the bus after school, my mum doesn't want me to get in the morning because it's too dangerous but I don't see the difference at all'* (Ryan). While others relished in their new found freedom *'so like we have to now take responsibility for our money, but like, with the old school, like your like your mum would just pay a few pounds (for lunch)'* (Lizzie).

Sub-theme 2b – Fresh Starts

For some of the pupils starting secondary school was an opportunity to get away from associations with the past. Many pupils talked about having a 'fresh start' and have the opportunity to develop and create a new image for themselves. Some of the pupils were excited about the prospect of a 'new beginning', *'It's just a way for*

you to have, if you don't really get on well in primary school you have a brand new start', (Ollie), while others were disappointed with the reality, 'well, I thought it was going to be a new slate, but really it's not.....yea I thought it was going to be a fresh start....but it's not because I am still misbehaving', (Jackson).

Sub-theme 2c – Misconceptions of Secondary School

A common thread to emerge from all of the transcripts was a deluded sense of fear of secondary school. Each pupil had a false impression as to what they expected from secondary school. Lizzie spoke of the media portraying a negative image of secondary school which caused her anxiety, however since she had made the transition she understood that it was a general misconception, *'so I think that now I can think that no that isn't true, that's just a book and that's just a film and that is not real'.*

Other pupils also spoke of their relief when they experienced the reality of secondary school, *'that secondary school isn't as bad as you think it is....because I thoughtlike you're not going to make any friends and you're always going to get into fights, and yea....yea it is a lot better'* (Ryan).

4.1.3 Research Question (RQ) 2 – Experiences of the Transition Project

Theme 1 – The Pendulum Swings: Accepting Support

Each pupil had a different experience of the project. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as the different primary schools may have interpreted the project differently, resulting in different experiences for the pupils. This will be further discussed within the next chapter. Even though the pupils all appeared to have experienced the project differently, there is a common theme that emerged from

each of the transcripts; the sway of accepting support. Some pupils found it difficult to engage with the project for many reasons, for others the project permitted them to question themselves and some pupils experienced a sense of growth through the support offered.

Sub-theme 1a – Out of the pupils' control

When the project was first discussed with some of the pupils, there was a sense of uncertainty and possible anxiety, *'I was feeling a bit nervous because I didn't know'* (Sarah). It is clear that some of the pupils were not fully and appropriately consulted with about the project which led them to believe that it was forced upon them. They felt obliged and compelled to participate, *'I was a bit nervous.....about the transition project.....because I had to do the project'* (Mandy). Some pupils felt that they did not have an option or preference as to whether they participated in the project or not. They experienced feelings of being out of control. This enforcement caused Jackson to feel anger and a sense of blame about being put forward for the project, *'yea I didn't need it at all, I was thinking 'who the hell did that to me'.....I was like 'mum did you put me in the damn thing' and she went 'yes I did'.*

Sub-theme 1b – Questioning one-self

The project allowed some pupils to question themselves. Several pupils, similar to Jackson (above quote) did not feel they required support surrounding their transition, *'no, I was fine, I didn't need help but mum said it would help'*, (Ryan). This must have been a confusing time for these pupils, as they believed they were 'fine' or 'normal' and did not require support, however their parents and their primary school thought otherwise. This confusion made them question their sanity and consider whether

they are actually 'normal', *'I feel I didn't need it all, I thought I was normal.....yea I thought I wouldn't have to do anything'* (Jackson).

Many pupils experienced a sense of relief when they discovered that other children were involved in the project also. This appeared to normalise their concerns and worries about *'being the only one'* (Sarah). Ollie too experienced a great sense of relief when he was introduced to other children involved in the project. There was a feeling that he felt lonely and trapped by his anxieties and discovering that others too may have felt similar to him helped release some of his worries, *'I was like I am not the only one who is like this and there is lots more people who have the same problems and worries as me so it didn't make me feel all alone'*.

The experiences of the project also let the pupils reflect on the wider aspects of transition and consider how well prepared they were for it, *'I just thought about the future and how it would help me'*, (Ollie).

Sub-theme 1c – Feelings of Readiness and Completion

For most of the pupils the experience of participating in the Transition Project enabled them to feel more prepared and ready for secondary school, *'I was thinking, I just want to go straight to secondary school and skip a few months, I felt like I just wanted to be there now'* (Ollie). Some pupils accredited the project for increasing their self-esteem and developing their confidence. Others used the group component of the project for practising conversations with others and developing friendships. Sarah experienced an increase in her confidence about making friendships because of her participation in the project, *'well I thought that I would make friends because like mmm, because like, when we done the transition project I made friends there so I thought that I was going to make friends here'*.

For Lizzie the project has yet to finish. She liked to believe that the project was still running. She had made such a strong attachment to the project that she was not ready to let go of it just yet, *'well like I still don't think it has finished yet because like mmm, I feel like it will end for me, well probably like year 11 because like you are still moving'*.

4.2 Individual Analysis

As this research is idiographic in nature, I considered it appropriate to analyse each pupil's transcript separately in relation to the research questions. This is to ensure the participants' voices can be heard and their experiences understood.

4.3 Participant 1 – Ollie

Ollie was referred to the Transition Project because his parents and primary school were concerned about his high anxiety levels. His teachers thought he would find the transition to secondary school hard to cope with. In primary school, if Ollie got worried or upset about anything he would become distressed and remove himself from class. Ollie required the support of the teaching staff at his primary school to help him calm down. Ollie has a speech impediment and he struggles to articulate speech clearly. He is known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

4.3.1 Research Question (RQ) 1 - Experiences of Transition

Theme 1: Struggling to Cope

The use of the term 'struggling' in the title of this theme is intended to highlight the level of difficulty and desperation felt by Ollie and the immense effort required of him to make the transition to secondary school.

R: ok, so how would you describe moving to secondary school?

P1: mmm well it was, it was a bit of a challengei meant that it wasn't easy.....to make all of those major changes

Sub-theme 1a – Anxieties and Lack of Control

Ollie's experiences of moving to secondary school was fraught with tensions and anxieties. He expressed that he found the transition process difficult to cope with.

P1:there was a lot of worries

R: um

P1: yea i had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....

R: what do you mean by hard?

P1: hard, well hard to cope with everything

R: um

P1: things changing, that was hard

The element of change and aspects of his life that he could no longer control was cause for stress. The experiences of not knowing what was going to happen and the fear of the unknown resulted in anxiety.

P1: well at the start I didn't really understand how to find which classroom I go to, and where to go and stuff and who to go to and what my teachers....there was a lot of worries

Sub-theme 1b – Social Pain

Forming relationships and friendships with others appeared to be very important to Ollie. Not forming these relationships quickly and feeling alone meant that Ollie experienced feelings of rejection and social isolation which led to a sense of grief.

P1: mm very sad ... well usually it would happen about the breaks and the lunch times, well usually, for the first day i just eat lunch by myself and i think on the second day

R: um, yea (long pause) what was that like?

P1: it wasn't very nice, i was sad because i was by myself (pause)

A fear of being alone was a common thread throughout Ollie's transcript. He placed a lot of pressure upon himself to make friends quickly so that he would not be alone.

P1: well like I don't like being alone

When he found it difficult to form friendships, he appeared to have felt a sense of failure and disappointment.

P1: well usually it was bad, well usually on the induction night it was bad, I talked to some people but i didn't really get to know them and make friends

Sub-theme 1c – Coping with Moving to Secondary School: A Sense of Survival

Following on from Ollie's apparent fear of being alone, was the sense of accomplishment, security and success he felt when he finally made some friends.

P1: yea i have made lots and lots of people, most of them are my friends now (pause)

R: so what's that like?

P1: nice and happy and comfortable

R: yea?

P1: I don't really have any worries, don't really have any problems, just everything is fine, nothing bad is happening.... its good, Im not alone anymore and have no worries

Ollie felt that he had overcome his own anxieties and experienced relief and feelings of completion now that he had made some friends. These friendships allowed him to feel safe and secure and employed a sense of belonging and attachment to his new school.

The pride Ollie took in his perceived success was also clear from his tone when describing how he conquered the many changes he had to make.

P1: well it was, it was a bit of a challenge, but then I managed to do it.....I meant that it wasn't easy....to make all of those major changes but in the end I managed it....because I practiced and I well sort of figured out solutions

4.3.2 RQ1 - Theme 2: Feelings of Liberation

This theme comprises of a variety of emotions concerned with freedom experienced by Ollie during his transition to secondary school. Ollie experienced a journey from primary school where he felt confined, to experiencing a renaissance in secondary school.

Sub-theme 2a – The Imprisonment of Primary School

Ollie made reference to feelings of being trapped or confined during his time in primary school. He referred to those in authority as 'they' and there was a feeling of imprisonment when he stated that;

P1: like, even, like even between the lessons they wouldn't let you go inside or go in the computer room, they just made you go outside and that's all

As Ollie described his primary school, he provided an impression of a space that was crammed with people. Ollie's description of primary school evoked a feeling of claustrophobia.

R: so what other words would you use to describe your primary school?

P1: mmmmmmmmm (pause) mmm crowded.

R: crowded?

P1: like there was four years and like the classroom was crowded and the like outside was crowded and even the lunch area

R: um, what did that make you feel like?

P1: crowded and squashed.....

When discussing his new secondary school, he provided a vision of space and freedom. Ollie felt more in control of the space around him, of his own belongings and how he used his free time which comforted him.

P1: the building is a lot bigger than my primary school.... that is better because I don't have to be squashed up against someone, and mixing books... i would say in secondary school there is also something to do, like

out here there is tennis, table tennis, football, and there is computers all around

Sub-theme 2b – Hoping to form a New Identity

During his experience of moving to secondary school, Ollie hoped that this transition would have had a positive impact on his identity. Throughout transition, one can change who they once were in primary school and be a different person in secondary. Ollie spoke openly and at length about himself as someone who was consumed with anxiety; *I had a lot of worries*. He was hoping to free himself from the person he was in primary and become somebody new.

P1: It's just a way for you to have, if you don't really get on well in primary school you have a brand new start.

Ollie's joy was apparent when talked about how he was in secondary school. He had become more popular and confident in himself.

P1: I have about ten times as more friends than I did in primary school. It is very nice to have the friends and I can play with people and talk to them.

4.3.3 Research Question (RQ) 2 -Experiences of the Transition Project

Theme 1 – 'I could cross off some of my list of worries'

One main theme arose from the analysis in relation to the above research question. The title of that theme is a quote taken from the transcript which overall highlights Ollie's experience of the Transition Project.

Participating in the Transition Project, Ollie experienced an enormous sense of relief and escape. Before the project, he appeared to have been trapped in his worries. He

was heavily burdened with anxieties about moving to secondary school, he felt there was no way out. When the project was first discussed with him he experienced feelings of great joy and hope.

R: what were you thinking then (when he first was told about the project)?

P1: hurrah! (laughs and shouts)

R: what do you mean by 'hurrah'?

P1: like I had a way to tackle my worries.....and a way to solve them

R: ok, so how did that make you feel?

P1: well, I'm not sure....(pause)... I felt like well this must be the... now I have all, now I have a way to like tackle it, I have one less worry

The use of the words 'now I have it all' and the energy exuded when he laughs while shouting 'hurrah' conveyed the obvious urgent need to be rescued. There was a sense of desperation about how worried he was about moving to secondary school. The Transition Project brought him salvation and hope.

Ollie placed a vast amount of hope and faith into the Transition Project. There was a sense that he had been released from his worries so that he could now accept the help from others.

P1: It made me realise that what was going well and what needed change and stuff I needed help with

Throughout the course of the Transition Project Ollie experienced a shift in his own self-perception. Prior to the project he was obsessed with his anxieties, believing he was unable cope with them by himself. He deemed himself to be the only person

suffering, '*only one who is like this*' and thought of himself as abnormal or strange. Meeting other pupils during the project allowed him to normalise his worries and concerns.

R: so what was it like to be part of the group?

P1: mmmm I was like I am not the only one who is like this and there is lots more people who have the same problems and worries as me so it didn't make me feel all alone

His participation in the project increased his self-confidence and he began to believe he could cope with moving to secondary school.

P1: we talked about the problems and the, the future and my mum came out with solutions and then it just made me feel like I was all ready because I knew how to sort it

The term 'all ready' indicated a certain sense of completion and preparedness. Ollie felt that he was equipped with skills that he was taught and considered himself ready to start secondary school.

P1: I was thinking, I just want to go straight to secondary school and skip a few months, I felt like I just wanted to be there now

4.4 Participant 2 – Sarah

Sarah was referred to the Transition Project due to her primary school's concerns about her ability to social interact with others and develop friendships. Sarah presents a shy quite girl who is often reluctant to engage with others. She too has a

speech impediment and struggles to articulate speech clearly. Throughout the semi-structured interview, Sarah whispered her responses.

4.4.1 *RQ 1 (Experiences of Transition)*

Theme 1 - Experiences of Loss and Anger

Sarah recalled how familiar and secure she felt at primary school. Sarah left the safety and familiarity of primary school to cross the daunting threshold of secondary.

R: what was primary school like for you?

P2: good

R:umm yea?

P2: mmm, eerr yea, because eer like it was good to have people you know there like to have friends around and play with.....it was friendly

R: yea yea?

P2:I think like, coz the people like are nice and were not like fighting

This extract highlights Sarah's feelings of belonging to primary school. Tension and aggression emerge from this extract, which implied that she felt safe at primary school and may not feel safe at secondary school. Sarah appeared to present several stages of grief when she described her experiences of moving to secondary school.

Sub Theme 1a – Longing for Primary School

Sarah described her primary school as 'fun' and 'friendly'. There was a sense that she thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated her time spent there.

P2: like I really enjoyed it (primary school), coz all the people were nice and teachers

R: yea?

P2: yea like I was happy there (long pause)

The use of the word 'there' and the long pause after her statement suggested that Sarah was experiencing a sense of loss and longing for her primary school. She wished to go back there and experience the sense of comfort and security that her primary school offered. Perhaps this comment indicated that she was not happy in her new secondary school and longs for her old school.

Sub-theme 1b – Anger for Having to Leave

Sarah discussed how she felt when she had to leave primary school. There was a sense of being forced to move that is beyond her control. She felt annoyed and upset by the imminent transition as she was worried that she may not make any friends and that there was nothing she can do about it.

R: so when you were thinking that, what were you feeling about moving?

P2: well like I felt quite angry because I was thinking that I might not make friends and I was like I don't want to go to secondary school...like I was frustrated (long pause)

Sarah did not wish to lose the comfort and familiarity of having friends and of knowing people in her primary school. She felt irritated that this transition had been forced on her and expressed a wish not to attend secondary school.

Sarah portrayed herself as a victim who was forced to go to secondary school. She had a lot of anxiety that she would not make any friends.

P2: well like I was like angry because like I was the only one going to this school and my friends were going to the other one and I was the only one and I was like angry because like i wouldn't like make new friends

The use of the term 'only one' not only conveyed a sense of being a victim and of suffering but also a sense of blame. So to say if Sarah failed to make friends in secondary school she would not be responsible, as it was not her fault that she had to move and leave primary school.

4.4.2 Theme 2 – Sense of Fear

The use of the term 'fear' in the title of this theme was intended to emphasise the extreme terror and dread Sarah experienced as she made her transition.

P2: I was like really scared because I didn't want to go (to secondary school).

Sarah's major concerns surrounded the loss of hope and the fear of older pupils.

Sub-theme 1 – Loss of hope

As noted previously, Sarah expressed a wish not to make the move to secondary school, she wanted to stay within the comforts of her primary school. Sarah was full of dread at the thought of transition.

P2: mmm, eer, I thought it would be like horrible and stuff.....yea....because like you don't anyone in your form and like you thought they would be really like horrible

Sarah lost all hope that her transition might be a positive experience. She was desperately anxious that she might not make any friends and was also concerned that she might be bullied.

P2: I was thinking like, there was going to be loads of bullying and stuff like that

R: so what were you feeling?

P2: I felt like I was going to be bullied and things like that

R: yea?

P2: it was quite scary

Throughout her transcript, Sarah did not elude to ever feeling excitement and joy or a sense of anticipation about moving to secondary school. There was a strong sense of hopelessness. She was consumed with feelings of worry and dread.

P1: yea....because like you don't anyone in your form and like you thought they would be really like horrible

Sub-theme 2b – Fear of Older Pupils

The fear of older pupils within her secondary school was apparent throughout Sarah's transcript and there were several descriptions of feeling intimidated and frightened. She recalled how she felt safe in primary school because as a Year 6 pupil she was the eldest in the school.

P2: because like in primary school it makes you feel comfortablelike the year 6s aren't as like big as the year 10s and everything and then in secondary school you have got like the bigger ones and its sort of scarier

Sarah felt threatened and frightened of the older pupils in her school. It is unclear as to what she thought they might do to her, but it was obvious that she felt unsafe.

P2: well like because like the year 10s all crowed round and like staring at you... like I don't like it

Arousing feelings of fear was for her protection. Fear was Sarah's ability to recognise a perceived danger which then led to an urge for her to either confront it or seek shelter/support.

P2: I think like it was scary because when I first moved, I thought like coz we were going in all the year 10s and 11s would be there and there would be loads of people and I got like quite scared but then we got in the classroom and I felt like comfortable then coz it was like just us (long pause)

4.4.3 RQ 2 (Experiences of the Transition Project)

Theme 1 – Initial Sense of Fear

As noted in the previous research question, Sarah initially described the Transition Project as 'scary'. She was concerned that she was the only pupil chosen for the project. She believed there was something wrong with her and had a fear of others talking about her.

Sub-theme 1a – Fear of being the 'only one'.

From reading Sarah's transcript it is clear that Sarah was not consulted with appropriately about the Transition Project. She appeared to be misinformed about some of the key aspects of the project. This lack of information caused Sarah a great deal of anxiety and fear. She was very worried that she was the only pupil chosen for

the project and she was scared at the thought of speaking one-to-one with a teacher/another adult.

P2: well my mum said it and my teacher said it so like I felt like I was going to be the only one doing it coz I didn't see anyone else like someone saying it to them, like I didn't know who would be there

R: um, so what was the like?

P2: well I think it was like quite scary..... because if it was me and just a teacher I think I would be a bit scared

Sarah appeared to have a fear of speaking one-to-one with a teacher. After reading back through Sarah's transcript, I had to question whether Sarah was worried or scared about speaking to me. I concluded that Sarah had been told that she could leave whenever she wished and did not have to participate in the research. I continuously 'checked-in' with Sarah to ensure that she was happy to continue with the interview.

Sub-theme 1b – Fear that there is 'something wrong with me'

As discussed in the above sub-theme, Sarah was afraid that she would be the only one in the project. She believed that there may be something wrong with her as she saw nobody else singled out for the project. She experienced feelings of paranoia and therefore mistrusted the project.

P2: I think I was feeling quite scared because like if I was the only one I would be like really scared and think there was something wrong with me

Sub-theme 2c – Fear of others speaking about her

This feeling of paranoia continued when Sarah learnt that she would have her own review meeting. She was very worried about what the teachers would say about her and almost implied that she did not wish to attend.

P2: well coz it was all the teachers and my mum I felt quite scared because like all the teachers were going to talk about me and stuff

4.4.4 Theme 2 – Sense of Relief

As Sarah became more aware of the project, she was overcome by a great sense of relief, realising that there were other pupils involved in the project. As the project evolved, Sarah made an important connection and realisation that working in the group environment with other pupils with whom she did not previously know was similar to how the first few days of secondary school would be.

P2: I was thinking it would be like one person in here, like talking to just one person, and like we would talking throughout the all whole but instead like we got other people from different schools and they came and we made friends there so it was like in secondary school it would be like that and not like real scary

Sarah was relieved to learn that she was not the only one who was worried about going to secondary school. It is important for all children and young people to feel like they are like/similar to others and are not different. Sarah used the term 'in the end' which implied there was a sense of overcoming a struggle, perhaps her fear of being the 'only one'.

P2: but like in the end like there was quite a few of us so I felt like I was, I wasn't the only one there who was scared about going to secondary school

4.4.5 Theme 3 – Developing Confidence and Building Self-Esteem

Over the course of the transition project, Sarah developed her confidence and began to believe that she could make friends in secondary school. She also began to think in a more positive manner about herself.

Sub-theme 3a – Increasing Self-Esteem

Sarah's self-esteem increased after her review meeting. During this meeting, all the adults commented on the positive attributes Sarah had. These statements increased her feelings of self-worth.

P2: well, I noticed that people said nice things about me which was like nice and i noticed that like I was feeling quite calm.....Because all the teachers were speaking about me and stuff like that, it was like all good stuff and i felt good like they were talking about good stuff about me

Sub-theme 3b – Increasing Hope and Confidence

Sarah's experienced a sense of hope and she anticipates and believed that she would be able to make friends in secondary school because she had participated in the project.

P2: well I thought that I would make friends because like mmm, because like, when we done the moving on project I made friends there so I thought that I was going to make friends here (in secondary school)

Sarah's confidence and belief in herself increased throughout the course of the project. As her confidence rose, her anxieties about meeting new people decreased.

P2: yea because like before I was worrying about it, like who would be my friends, but when I started (the project), because I made friends there I felt like if I was at secondary school now then I would have already made friends

R: anything else?

P2: it's like increased my confidence talking to new people because like before I was worrying loads about it and then like when like I made friends there (during the project)

Sub-theme 3c – Sense of Completion

Sarah experienced a sense of completion and of accomplishment when the project ended. She felt ready to make her transition to secondary school. She appeared to have experienced a sense of independence and maturity. Similar to above, she associated the experience of the Transition Project to a comforting belief of how she would experience secondary school.

R: ok so what was that like (when the project ended)?

P2: mmm, I think it was alright because I didn't think I needed it anymore

R: can you tell me some more?

P2: well I sort of thought I didn't need it because I made friends there in the groups and I knew then I could make friends in my secondary school,

4.5 Participant 3 – Mandy

Mandy has a lovely smile. Her primary school were very concerned about her transition to secondary school as Mandy appeared to have high anxiety associated and triggered by school. Mandy did not speak in primary school or in other social

situations but can speak at home with her mother. She has selective mutism and significant anxiety issues. She is known to a number of professionals, including Child and Adolescent Mental Services (CAMHS). Mandy chose to write her answers on her whiteboard throughout the interview.

4.5.1 ***RQ 1 (Experiences of Transition)***

Theme 1. Multiple Identities

Mandy appeared to have experienced a change to her identity and developed a new identity with her transition to secondary school. Her experience of transition explored the journey of her identity change.

Sub-theme 1a. Identity in Primary School

One of the most interesting experiences communicated by Mandy was how she saw herself in primary school. Mandy said that she had a friend in primary school with whom she played with. When asked further, Mandy stated that her friend was disabled. This was the only friend Mandy mentioned in primary school throughout the transcript. Perhaps, Mandy identified herself as having some sort of disability in primary school. She felt as if she was different from others, that she did not fully belong there.

R: (Mandy points to a name she has written) so was that their name?

P3: (nods head)

R: ok, so what was that like?

P3: she was disabled

Continuing on from feeling different in primary school, Mandy felt trapped in her own silence. Perhaps her primary school reinforced her behaviour. For years, Mandy had been 'the girl who didn't speak in school' and that had become part of her identity, so much so, she believed that she did not have the ability to speak.

R: So you were telling me that you were feeling nervous and worried going into secondary school, can you tell me some more about that?

P3: because I can't speak

Sub-theme 1b. Escaping her past

Mandy had a fear of being the person she once was in Year 6 in primary school. There was something frightening about the prospect of returning to her primary school. Mandy believed she had moved on and developed a new identity. Returning to primary school would cause distress. I questioned whether she was afraid to return to primary school as she believed she would become the same person she once was.

R: ok, so if you could go back to yourself in Year 6 what would you say to yourself about moving to secondary school?

P3: I would say 'help I am in year 6 again'

R: so would you like you go back to year 6 again?

P3: no

R: no?

P3: I'm different now. Secondary school is cool and I don't want to go back to year 6.

As noted above, Mandy was afraid of returning to the person she was in primary school. She had developed a new identity and did not wish to be associated with who she once was, 'the girl that didn't speak'. She was escaping her previous world of silence. Her life had changed and she was embracing it with hope and opportunity.

P3: secondary school is my new life now

R: um, can you tell me some more about that?

P3: it is a new start and a chance to make new friends and be different

R: be different?

P3: a different person

Sub-theme 1c – Identity in Secondary School

Mandy had escaped her previous identity and experienced the formation of a new self image. Mandy felt a sense of belonging in her secondary school that she had never experienced in her primary school. In primary school she was invisible, now in secondary school she is accepted by others. She experienced great satisfaction and joy about becoming somebody new.

P3: I am a different person

R: a different person? Can you tell me more about that? I just want to make sure I understand what you mean.

P3: (shrugs shoulders) I am popular here

4.5.2 Theme 2. The Journey of Revelation

Like many children making the transition to secondary school, Mandy was anxious and felt tense about the move. However, she felt a sense of revelation and release from her worries when she realised secondary school was not how she imagined it to be.

Sub-theme 2a – Fearful of secondary school

Mandy appeared to have had many anxieties and was apprehensive about starting secondary school. Even though she did not fully enjoy herself at her primary school, it was familiar to her. Beginning secondary school was like entering an unknown world, which Mandy found rather daunting.

P3: I was nervous

R: so you were nervous, yea?

P3: because I am starting secondary school.....I was feeling worried and nervous

Sub-theme 2b – Previous beliefs dispelled

As noted above, Mandy was very worried about attending secondary school. Mandy experienced a sense of release and revelation when she realised she enjoyed attending secondary school. There was an element of surprise and relief when Mandy described her transition.

R: how would you describe your move to secondary school

P3: fun

R: fun? What fun?

P3: it's better than I thought

Sub-theme 2c - Sense of Success and Happiness

Mandy appeared to have experienced feelings of success and accomplishment. She was proud of herself for making the transition and deemed it to be successful. She did not feel as though she truly belonged in her primary school but now felt she fitted in well to her secondary school and was accepted by others. School was no longer a demanding and socially isolating place for her. Secondary school was effortless and she experienced feelings of finally being comfortable and happy.

R: ok, so thinking now you have been in school for about 3 months now, how do you think secondary school is going for you now?

P3: a piece of cake!! (smiles)

R: (laughs), so what do you mean by that?

P3: it's easy

R: it's easy? What's easy?

P3: making friends and being popular i have friends here....I am happy

R: so what's that like?

P3: good and fun

4.5.3 RQ 2 (*Experiences of the Transition Project*)

Theme 1. Being out of her control

Mandy became very distracted and disengaged when she was asked questions about the transition project. She appeared to become anxious of the Dictaphone during this stage of the interview.

R: (Mandy points to the Dictaphone) yep it's still on, look the light is on there, is that ok with you?

P3: (stares blankly and then nods her head)

She answered only a few questions and to other questions she shrugged her shoulders and shook her head. She also asked questions that were off topic, such as, '*do you watch family guy?*' I believed it to be in Mandy's best interest to finish the interview early as it was clear she was becoming uncomfortable within the interview environment.

One main theme was drawn from the analysis about Mandy's experience of the project.

Theme 1 – Being out of her control

Mandy felt as if the project had been forced upon her. It is clear that she was not consulted by her primary school about the project as she felt she had no other option but to take part in it. Mandy experienced feelings of being powerless and weak. She felt like the project was something that she had no control over and she was obliged to participate in.

R: what were you saying to yourself (about the transition project)?

P3: oh no

R: um? Can you tell me more?

P3: because I had to do the project

R: ok, so what do you mean by that?

P3: I'm not too sure.....being put for the project.....I had to do it.

I hypothesised that Mandy's general disengagement with talking about the project was that she did not enjoy participating in the project. Mandy was known to a number of professionals, including Child and Adolescent Mental Services (CAMHS). For many years Mandy had been receiving support from this service. I believed that Mandy had become over exposed to therapeutic interventions in the past and as a result became detached when discussing previous support she has received. Possibly she associated the Transition Project with her primary school and wished not to recall her experiences of that time. She may have believed that she had moved on from primary school and did not want to discuss any support received there. Also she could have wanted to convey to me that she was fine now, to leave her alone, and that she did not want any more help. Ultimately, she had moved on.

4.6 Participant 4 - Lizzie

Lizzie is a talkative girl. Her primary school were concerned about ability to form relationships with her peers and understand appropriate boundaries between herself and her teachers. Lizzie's father is in prison. She is known to social services and has been on the Child Protection Register. Lizzie has been put into care in the past but now is living with her mother. Lizzie witnessed domestic violence in the past.

4.6.1 RQ 1 (*Experiences of Transition*)

Theme 1: Clinging to the Past

The first theme presents an account of the significance of Lizzie's relationship to the past. This theme examines the influence her primary school has had on her, the sense of loss she experienced and highlights the insecure attachments she had made.

Sub-theme 1a - Feeling of Loss

Lizzie experienced feelings of loss and grief when she reflected back on her time in primary school. She described that her old primary school had undergone a renovation and now is completely different. She seemed to be upset by this change to the building's appearance. She experienced a sense of loss and feelings of being lost as she could no longer recognise her own primary school. She had not fully settled in her secondary school (this will be discussed further later in this section) but when she returned to her primary school it was not as she remembered. Lizzie experienced a state of limbo. She was at a loss as to where she belonged.

P4: because like I was upset, and I am still upset from leaving my primary schoolI miss it obviously.....like it changed a lot, like it changed since we have left, like i went back there

R: and what was it like going back?

P4: it was a bit different, because like, when we like went back..... yea like we went in there and it was just really different, and we saw our old teachers and we were like 'this is really different'

Sub-theme 1b - Attachment Issues

Lizzie appeared to have developed certain attachments to her old peers and teachers from primary school. It was very important to Lizzie that she was not forgotten by her previous teachers. For children that have developed insecure attachments to adults, it is of the utmost importance that they feel that they are kept in mind at all times. Lizzie's emotional security depended upon the fact that she was held in mind by important adults in her life, her primary school teachers. Lizzie appeared to be clinging onto elements of her primary school. She had physically left the school however she had not left emotionally.

P4: it was nice like to see them and stuff and she said (teacher) that like she was missing us all and everything and because like I go to guides and there some students in like my old school in year 6 now and they were like oh 'Ms X don't talk about you much, yea' well yea, we actually went back there Ms X was like yea we miss you loads, we talk about you loads , so yea they was lying and wrong, cause obviously Ms X wouldn't lie, mmm, it was like really good.....yea like I think it was nice to know that even though you have left they are still there for you (pause)

Keeping in contact with her friends from primary school was very important to Lizzie. She associated her old friendships with her primary school and feeling safe. She used social media to stay in contact with her old peers. Perhaps the time and energy she spent maintaining these connections, was time she did not use forming and developing new friendships in her new secondary school.

P4: but we still do chat and stuff, we do bbm (blackberry messenger) and stuff and on facebook

R: ok, so you are still in touch with your old friends?

P4: yea

R: and what is that like?

P4: it's like nice and good.....it's nice to see all my old school friends again

I can identify with Lizzie's desire to remain in contact with old friends. My closest friends are those with whom I went to primary school with and perhaps I also found it difficult to 'let go' of the safety net of primary school.

4.6.2 Theme 2. Struggling to adjust to Secondary School

As noted previously, Lizzie experienced a sense of struggle to adapt to her new secondary school life. She had not developed close relationships with the teachers which unnerved her. Lizzie also struggled to cope with the physically and emotional demands the school day placed on her.

Sub-theme 2a – Relationship to Teachers

Developing relationships with adults was very important to Lizzie as it made her feel safe and secure. Lizzie experienced a state of uncertainty as to why her secondary school teachers were not similar to her primary school teachers. Lizzie's conflict with one particular teacher caused her a great deal of distress. In primary school, Lizzie was taught by female teachers who knew her and her family well. She viewed her teachers as maternal figures in her life. In secondary school, those bonds were gone, and Lizzie was trying to understand that not all teachers were the same. She had to learn how to adjust to each teacher's different style.

P4: like in primary they are nice (teachers).....here like my phone rang off in Mr X's class and he is so strict, I don't like him, mmm, and it rang off in his

class and like he gave me a detention straight away, he didn't even let me explain anything.....with Mr X, he was just like 'no no', he actually made me cry in like 3 lessons.... really just like horrible, aarrggh (shouted), I really just don't like him,

The way Lizzie shouted 'aarrggh' highlighted her distress, anguish and frustration at trying to adjust to secondary school.

Sub-theme 2b - Physical and Emotional Demands of Secondary School

Lizzie struggled to cope with the physical and emotional strains placed on her in secondary school. Trying to make friendships and develop relationships with the teachers appeared to be too much for Lizzie to handle. She experienced feelings of exhaustion. Lizzie's state was manifested by both her physical fatigue and a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally drained. She sought comfort and support from her mother.

P4: and then the next day comes and you're like 'mum, I'm so tired', like for the first like 3 weeks I was like shattered..... like here and like you come home and you're like 'eeefff mum, I'm so tired', like I'm even tired now.... like because like I was in like only 2 lessons and I'm still tired cause it's like such a big day.....you don't have enough energy to...

Sub-theme 2c – 'Average Transition'

Lizzie described her transition from primary to secondary school as 'average'. It could be suggested that Lizzie experienced her transition as only being 'average' because she was still finding it difficult to let go of her primary school. She appeared

to prefer her primary school and therefore comparing her primary and secondary school did not help her to settle within her secondary school.

R: ok, so overall how would you say it's gone for you?

P4: average,

R: um?

P4: well like basically no one's transfer to secondary school is perfect, unless you actually absolutely hated your last school and like your new school is like the best ever thing in the world, and like no-one's move to secondary school can be perfect unless you absolutely think your old primary school was rubbish, and you just wanted to get away from it

4.6.3 RQ 2 (Experiences of the Transition Project)

Theme 1 – Attachment to the Transition Project

As discussed in the Theme 1 above, Lizzie appeared to have difficulty moving on and letting go of past events. Similarly regarding the Transition Project, Lizzie seemed not quite ready to let go of the project just yet. It could be suggested that she associated the project with her primary school and therefore would not release herself from it.

Sub-theme 1a – Continuation of Transition Project

For most children who participated in the project, they perceived it to end in the summer of Year 6. However, Lizzie clinged onto the project and believed it was not finished. She portrayed the idea that she would need the project for future transitions. This conveys a sense of hopelessness and anxiety surrounding her belief in her ability to cope with transition.

P4: well like I still don't think it has finished yet because like mmm, I feel like it will end for me, well probably like year 11 because like you are still moving

R: um

P4:I feel like because like I am still moving on through the school and like all of that....I'm a still using it, and I probably will still use it when I go through to year 11, up to year 11 and then I'll have another transition project, from year 11 to college (laughs)

Sub-theme 1b – Attachment to the Researcher

It is clear and understandable that Lizzie associated me with the Transition Project. When asked questions about the completion of the project, Lizzie was unable to detach me from the project. She experienced a sense of anxiety and possibly loss when she realised that she may not see me again. I not only represented the project but also symbolized an element of her primary school. Losing contact with me was another part of her primary school life ending.

R: when do you think that was for you (the finishing of the project)?

P4: well like I don't feel it is finished just yet, because we are still meeting and talking about secondary school, and like will I see you again?

R: mmm, I'm not too sure about that, possibly not.

P4: but like will you be asking me anymore questions?

R: about the project?

P4: no no, like will you be seeing me again, with more questions about the project?

R: probably not, no

P4: so is this the last time we will talk about the project?

R: probably is, at this stage, is that ok?

P4: (long pause, nods head)

4.7 Participant 5 – Jackson

Jackson was referred to the transition project because his primary school were concerned about his behaviour in school and at home. They were also worried about how he would cope with the transition to secondary school. When Jackson was born he was put up for adoption. His first adoption was unsuccessful and he remained in care for many years. Jackson was adopted by his current parents when he was 5 years old. Jackson and his family are known to and receive support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

On the day Jackson was interviewed, he had previously been removed from his science lesson. His teacher noted that Jackson was asked to leave the class due to his behaviour during the lesson. Throughout the interview Jackson made many references to this event and it was clear from reading the transcript that he was unhappy and angry that he had being removed from his class. I decided to continue with the interview as it was believed that this was Jackson's experience of secondary school. Jackson was at risk of exclusion from his secondary school.

4.7.1 RQ 1 (*Experiences of Transition*)

Theme 1 – Sense of Pessimism (loss of hope) – ‘*like, there was no sun, but that is London for you*’

A main theme to emerge from the data was Jackson's strong sense of pessimism as he experienced his transition to secondary school. There was a feeling that Jackson was truly disappointed about his transition experience. Jackson experienced a sense of hope prior to transition believing that starting secondary school would be a new chance for him. However his hopes were dashed with a sense of disappointment in himself.

P5: well, I thought it was going to be a new slate, but really it's not

R: a new slate?

P5: yea I thought it was going to be a fresh start

R: yea? Um?

P5: but it's not because I am still misbehaving

Sub-theme 1a – Negative Perception of himself

Throughout his transition Jackson appeared to have developed a negative self image. This negative perception of himself influenced his experiences of his own transition. He appeared to find it easier to speak negatively about himself, while he casually dismissed any positive attributes. Within the transcript Jackson mentioned commendation awards that he had received. I encouraged him to speak more about them. It was clear that Jackson had difficulties talking about himself in a positive manner. He had a strong belief that he was a 'naughty/bad person' and he identified himself with negative behaviour.

R: ok, so what were your commendations for?

P5: mmm, behaving and doing monitoring, all the simple stuff, they were easy to get, and then the discredits for chatter, constant chatter, disruptive, playing around with my friend, not listening to the teacher or throwing stuff at the teacher, throwing paper at the teacher and that kind of thing and stuff....I have been racist, I have been annoying to the teachers....and if I had my diary I would should you what I have be doing

Sub-theme 1b – Becoming Disengaged from Education

Jackson experienced a sense of detachment and disengagement from education through his transition. He emphasised that he would like to do absolutely nothing in school. He experienced a general lack of enthusiasm for his school and highlighted the fact that he found education boring. Perhaps Jackson's secondary school did not stimulate him. There is a close relationship between a pupil's enjoyment of learning, their attitudes to learning and education that links with disengagement from education. Jackson appeared to have no enjoyment or motivation for learning which allowed him to become slowly detached from education.

P5: we did no work on the first day of secondary school

R: ok, so how were for feeling on that day?

P5: boring! I just wanted to watch tv and not go to school

R: anything else?

P5: nommm, mmm, fun, like it was fun because like the first day we did like nothing

Jackson's behaviour in the classroom could be a sign of him 'switching off' leading to disengagement from education.

4.7.2 Theme 2 – A Sense of Bravado

Throughout the interview and when reading the transcript I had to ask whether Jackson was looking for a reaction. Was he trying to shock me in some way? As Jackson had known and felt comfortable with me, had this level of familiarity influenced Jackson throughout the interview?

Jackson spoke widely about all the negative behaviours he engaged in while at school. He demonstrated a certain awareness and acknowledgement of his own behaviours.

P5: yea I misbehave and mmm, shouting out during class, I was doing 'aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhahhhh' (singing loudly), with my friend because we always mess about when we are playing a game on the computer when we were supposed to be doing science work

Sub-theme 2a – Confirmation from others

I believe that while Jackson presented himself as a confident boy, this confidence was a pretence. Jackson experienced difficulties trying to fit in with a group of friends. By misbehaving in school he gained access to this group. He was looking for attention and affirmation from others. He constantly sought approval from his peers who seemed to reward his behaviour by giving him the attention that he craved.

P5: my science teacher, he is old, and I ran away from him, he had to, I ran downstairs and everyone started laughing because he ran after me and he ran so slow

Sub-theme 2b – Appearing Vulnerable

Jackson appeared to be detached from any sanctions put in place by the school. He seemed to be indifferent and unemotional about the consequences of his own behaviour.

P5: so then he goes 'give me your diary' and he gave me a discredit, but i don't care....it's fun in detention,

However it was my opinion that again Jackson presented with a false sense of boldness and courage. Jackson described how a lunch activity was an opportunity to annoy the dinner ladies. He aggressively shouted into the Dictaphone '*stupid dinner ladies we are out for you*'. After this comment, Jackson appeared vulnerable. He was concerned that someone else in the school would hear that comment and that he would get into trouble. He required reassurance that the school would not read his transcript nor hear his interview.

P5: well can you put that in personal because like

R: what do you mean?

P5: because like I don't want anyone in the school to know

R: ok

P5: I don't want to get in trouble again

Within in these few lines, I could see a different side to Jackson. Different from the impervious and invincible character he portrayed. He appeared vulnerable and exposed in this piece of data. Perhaps, Jackson was experiencing feelings of desire to change his behaviour in school, as he did not wish to get into trouble again.

4.7.3 RQ 2 (*Experiences of the Transition Project*)

Theme 1 – Sense of Anger

As noted previously a common thread that was evident from Jackson's transcript was a feeling of intense anger and negativity. This strand very much identifies itself when Jackson spoke about his experiences of the Transition Project.

Sub-theme 1a - Feeling out of control

Jackson experienced feelings of anger when he was told that he had been put forward for the Transition Project. He felt as if this decision was made outside of his control and that he was helpless to do anything about it. He did not believe he required any support with his transition. He directed a lot of his anger and frustration towards his mother. There was a strong feeling of resentment towards his mother for agreeing that he could participate in the project.

P5: I was thinking 'who the hell did that to me' when I had to do it, and the person I thought of was my mum, so I went up to her and what the words were she said was 'yes you do really need it' and I was like 'mum did you put me in the damn thing' and she went 'yes I did'

The words 'damn thing' highlighted the intensity of Jackson's rage and fury. It also gave an indication of how he felt about the project. He experienced the project to be worthless and useless. Participating in it was of great annoyance to him. Jackson appeared to have been experiencing feelings of reluctance and frustration that his participation in the project was beyond his control. He experienced feeling detached from the project as no-one was listening to him when he said he did not wish to participate. This feeling of detachment transferred into the interview itself.

R: what did you think when someone said that you were being put forward to the project?

P5: boring

R: boring?

P5: I didn't want to do it.....tiring and boring.....that is what I am now

R: yea, ok, we won't be much longer, are you ok to continue?

P5: yea

Sub-theme 1b - Self Reflection

The experience of being in the project, gave Jackson the opportunity to question himself. When presented with the opportunity to participate in the project, he experienced feelings of self-reflection. There was an element of doubt that Jackson experienced. He questioned whether he was normal or not. For Jackson, admitting that he may need some support was a sign of weakness and vulnerability, something that was not necessarily 'normal'. He appeared to be irritated that the project was making him question himself and quickly dismissed it.

R: so overall how do you feel about the mop?

P5: I feel I didn't need it all, I thought I was normal

R: normal?

P5: yea I thought I wouldn't have to do anythingyea I didn't need it at all

Sub-theme 1c- The Joy of Pain

Jackson experienced a feeling of elation when the project had ended. He referred to his experiences of the project as painful. My position in the interview clearly did not affect Jackson's description of his experiences of the project. He gave a very honest account of how he felt.

P5:make them go through the pain

R: the pain?

P5: the pain of the project..... don't take that offensively, you're nice

It could be suggested that the pain Jackson experienced was actually the pain of transition. Jackson has made many transitions in his life and perhaps he finds them difficult to cope with, so much so, he masks this pain with anger and bravado.

When the project finally ended for Jackson he experienced a great sense of joy, almost a sense of salvation, that he had been freed from the pain of the project.

R: ok, so when the project finished what was that like? What were you thinking?

P5: thank God I'm so happy.

4.8 Participant 6 – Ryan

Ryan is a quiet boy. He was referred to the project as his primary school was concerned about his relationships with his peers. Ryan is physically disabled. He has cerebral palsy and has been bullied in the past.

4.8.1 RQ 1 (*Experiences of Transition*)

Theme 1 – The Great Escape from Primary School

Ryan experiences of moving to secondary school were encased by his longing to escape primary school.

Sub-theme 1a – Desperate to escape Primary School

Ryan recalled his primary school experience with anguish. He appeared to have given up all hope of ever enjoying an educational experience. From reading Ryan's transcript there was a sensation of despair when he described his experiences in primary school. He felt trapped there. Ryan almost sounded depressed when recounting his primary school experiences.

P6: rubbish....well it was just terrible (pause)

R: um, terrible, can you tell me some more about that?

P6: everything was terrible, well like I hated all of my teachers because I just didn't like it there at all.... yea, it was awful, it was miserable there

Sub-theme 1b – Anticipation for Secondary School

Ryan experienced a strong sense of longing for secondary school. He could not wait to leave his primary school. He was desperate to flee from its neglectful environment where he felt unsafe. He felt abandoned by those were due to care for him. Ryan evoked a sense of fear about the possibility of having to return to such a horrid place.

P6: no one cared about anything, just fight fight fight.....yea like no one cared, like every break and lunch time there would be a fight and even in the

*classrooms, people would throw stuff at each other and get away with it
(pause) yea I just didn't like it at all...it was crap....teachers didn't care about
anything or anyone, it was all a big fight basically (long pause) I never want to
go back*

As the promise of secondary school drew closer, Ryan was overcome with anticipation. He experienced a sense of hope and expectation that his new secondary school would prove to be the nurturing school that he had always wished for.

P6: I just couldn't wait to leave and go to another school

R: so you couldn't wait to leave?

*P6: yea, just I hated it there; I was looking forward to going to somewhere
away from there*

4.8.2 Theme 2 – The Euphoria of Secondary School

Ryan experienced a sense of elation when he made the transition to secondary school. He was delighted to be free of his old school. His sense of desperation was replaced by relief and joy.

P6: it's just much better than primary school

R: what makes it better?

*P6: (long pause) everything, you actually want to come to school now, while in
primary school I really didn't want to go*

Sub-theme 2a – Feeling secure and safe

Feeling secure and safe was very important to Ryan. As discussed above Ryan felt neglected in primary school, which led to a sense of fear for his own safety. Ryan described his teacher's in his primary school as not caring for the students, both in terms of their safety and academic progress. In secondary school, Ryan experienced feelings of being cared for and looked after by the teachers. Due to Ryan physical difficulties, it was important for him to feel secure and protected in school.

P6: mmm, yea like the stuff we do in lessons and the amount of time the teachers take, like they do in preparing the lessons, like in primary school all you done was sit down and write in a book but like in this school we do all different stuff....yea like the teachers put effort in.....yea, it's good, yea I feel it's better here because I feel safer

R: yea?

P6: because I know the teachers will do something if something happens to me and they look out for me to make sure no one picks on me

The feeling of belonging to a group and making friendships was very important to Ryan. Ryan experienced the sense of being cared for not only by the teachers but also by his new friends. Ryan now had a support system within the school which would help him feel secure in stressful situations. For Ryan these new friendships made a real difference to his emotional and social well-being.

P6: well because I have got quite a few friends they stick up for me, because this other day this boy had me in a headlock and then this boy in like year 9 came and speared him to the floor, so that was good

4.8.3 RQ 2 (*Experiences of the Transition Project*)

Theme 1 – A Sense of Uncertainty

Ryan's experiences of the Transition Project were related strongly to a sense of uncertainty and doubt. He was confused as to what the purpose of the project was and appeared to have been misinformed about various aspects it.

Sub-theme 1a – Parental Anxiety

Ryan appeared to have felt a little unsure as to why exactly he was referred to the project. He believed that he did not need support with his transition. There was a sense that the perceived anxieties surrounding Ryan's transition were external to him. He did not own these worries. Perhaps Ryan's mother believed that through involvement and encouragement to participate in the project, she could exert a positive influence on Ryan's educational outcomes. Often parental anxiety about transition can transfer onto their child, but it appeared Ryan was unaffected by his mother's concerns. If anything, maybe he felt comforted knowing that she was thinking about him.

P6: I didn't really mind, because my mum said it would help like when i go to secondary school,.....no (didn't think he needed it), I was fine, I didn't need help but mum said it would help

Sub-theme 1b – Feelings of Relief

When Ryan discovered more about the transition project, he experienced feelings of relief. Whether he was misinformed was not totally clear, but Ryan had misconceptions as to what the project actually involved. He was concerned that the project would require him to speak openly about his anxieties in a one-to-one

situation. For many children the prospect of talking to a strange adult is a daunting experience which can cause anxiety. As Ryan discovered the project involved several different elements (the groups and the reviews) there was a sense of relief.

P6: well like I didn't have a clue like what it was going to be about or what was going to happen, so I just went along with it.....like I thought I was going to be in trouble, I thought I had done something wrong.....I felt better, that's because I got other people to talk too and it's not just me in a room with someone else talking.

4.9 Summary of Key Findings

Each of the participants conveyed an element of 'struggle' in relation to their transition. Some participants, Sarah and Lizzie found leaving the comforts and security of primary school rather daunting. Ollie and Ryan appeared to struggle with the many changes moving to secondary school brought; bigger school, more pupils, more teachers and different routines. Jackson and Lizzie struggled with forming positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Overall, once the participants had some time to settle into their new secondary schools they began to adjust to their new routines and develop relationships with others.

Generally, friendship, bullying, relationships with teachers and developing new identities were the main themes to emerge from the data in connection to the participants' transition period.

With the regard to the Transition Project, most of the participants spoke positively about their overall experience of participating in the project. Sarah, Lizzie and Ollie believed the project increased their confidence in talking to new people and making

friends. Ultimately, they felt more prepared and ready for secondary school once the project had finished.

Interestingly, many of the participants seem to have felt obliged in some way to participate in the project. It appears that these pupils were not appropriately consulted with prior to participation in the project and therefore this led to increased feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Some pupils, for example, Jackson and Ryan believed that they did not require support prior to transition and appeared angry that others may have considered them vulnerable.

The next chapter will comment on these key findings in relation to previous research and literature.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5. Chapter Overview

This chapter relates the key findings of this research to previous literature on the transition from primary to secondary school. It explores the implications of such research and proposes how this research could influence the practice of Educational Psychologists. This chapter also contains a critical exploration of the research including its strengths and limitations and suggests ideas for future research within the topic area. The chapter concludes with personal reflections on the research process.

5.1 Commentary on Key Findings in Relation to Previous Research

5.1.1 Transition Project: Out of the Participants' Control

The findings from this research suggest that most pupils' experienced feelings of 'being out of control' and that they felt as if the Transition Project was forced upon them. They had no choice but to participate, *'I was a bit nervous.....about the transition project.....because I had to do the project'* (Mandy, participant 3). Jackson felt angry that he was not appropriately consulted about his participation in the project, *'yea I didn't need it at all, I was thinking 'who the hell did that to me'.....I was like 'mum did you put me in the damn thing' and she went 'yes I did'.*

These findings suggest that the pupils were not appropriately consulted with prior to starting the Transition Project. This is an important finding for the members of the Transition Project and the implications of which shall be addressed further in this chapter. The lack of information about the project led to feelings of anxiety, confusion and even anger. Cotterell's (1986) research stressed the importance of giving

adequate and appropriate information about a certain change to children. The feeling of 'being forced' to participate can greatly affect a person's willingness to engage with a support programme. It can also lead to questions about one-self, such as, '*I feel I didn't need it all, I thought I was normal*' (Jackson, participant 5).

While working on the Transition Project last year, I met with each pupil once before the project began. During these meetings I introduced myself, mentioned why I was there and explained the Transition Project to them. At each meeting I asked the pupil whether their primary school had mentioned the project to them before. All pupils told me they hadn't heard about the project until I had mentioned it. During these meetings the pupils were not asked whether they wished to participate in the project, it was assumed that their primary school had gained informed consent for their participation. This obviously was not the case and will need to be addressed in the future.

Many of the pupils were unaware of all the activities that were part of the project, such as, their person-centred review, individual support received in their primary school and the social skills groups. All of the pupils believed the Transition Project just consisted of the social skills group and appeared unaware of any extra support or interventions they received in school. The Transition Project placed a lot of trust and expectation onto the primary schools that participated in the project. The members of the project had faith that each primary school would provide some level of support to each pupil relating to the action plan developed in their person-centred review. Perhaps some of the interventions or strategies put in place by the primary schools were so subtle and inconspicuous in nature, such as 'ensure Ollie has more responsibilities in class to increase his self-esteem', that they went unnoticed by the pupils.

5.1.2 Transition Project Evokes a Sense of Readiness

Overall, most of the pupils upon reflection spoke positively about their experiences of the Transition Project. Even though some of the pupils had felt forced into participating in the project, they felt a certain sense of readiness once the project had finished, i.e. the pupils felt ready and prepared for their transition to secondary school. The project appeared to have increased some of the pupils self esteem and confidence. Some pupils believed the social skills group that was run within the project was a 'practice run' for secondary school. The social skills group allowed the pupils from different primary schools to practice interacting with each other in a safe and controlled environment, *'well I thought that I would make friends because like mmm, because like, when we done the transition project I made friends there so I thought that I was going to make friends here'* (Sarah). Practising social skills, such as 'good conversation starters' increased some of the pupils' confidence with meeting and talking to new people. These were essential skills for making friendships within the first few weeks of secondary school.

5.1.3 Preparing for Transition: Open/Induction Day Experiences

An interesting finding to emerge from the data explored how anxious one of the participants found the open/induction day experience. Ollie (participant 1) appeared to have a negative experience of the 'open day'/induction evening. He placed a lot of pressure on himself to form friendships during this time and when he did not make any friends he felt a strong sense of failure which increased his anxieties about moving to secondary school, *'on the induction night it was bad, I talked to some people but I didn't really get to know them and make friends'*. Interestingly, this finding appears to contradict previous research. Ofsted (2002) reported that most

Year 6 pupils often visit their new secondary school at an 'open day' prior to transition and this has shown to reduce pupils' anxieties about impending transition. Similarly, Galton et al. (2000) noted that this was the most successful approach to decreasing stress and anxiety in pupils prior to their transition. It could be suggested that this finding was different to that of previous studies because this current research explored vulnerable pupils' experiences. This highlights the point that vulnerable pupils appear to experience higher levels of anxiety around transition and do not necessarily respond in the same way as the majority of pupils when faced with different social situations (i.e. the open day).

5.1.4 *Transition is Anxiety Provoking*

The theme 'Struggling to Cope' emerged from each of the pupil's transcripts. However, this experience manifested itself differently for each of the participants. Anxiety surrounding friendship, leaving the 'safety' of primary school, relationships with teachers and adjusting to the new secondary school routine were discussed within the participants transcripts. The changes that occurred throughout transition from primary to secondary school evoked a great of anxiety for each of the participants. Ollie (participant 1) in particular appeared to experience the most significant amount of struggle and anxiety throughout his transition; *'yea I had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....hard, well hard to cope with everything'* (Ollie). Similarly, many of the pupils raised concerns about bullying. *'I was thinking like, there was going to be loads of bullying and stuff like that....I felt like I was going to be bullied and things like that....it was quite scary'* (Sarah, participant 2).

Some of the participants spoke about the change to their social position within the school setting. In secondary school they were the youngest and almost fearful of the

older pupils, *'like the year 6s aren't as like big as the year 10s and everything and then in secondary school you have got like the bigger ones and its sort of scarier'* (Sarah, participant 2).

Pupils' anxieties surrounding the changes that occur with transition is not necessarily a new finding. It is well documented within previous literature (Zeedyk et al, 2003; Roderick's, 1993; Tobbell, 2003). However, this provides a way of better understanding the transitional experiences of pupils. If professional focus on the changes encountered within the school settings and their affects (whether they be positive or negative), this can bring professional closer to pupils' experiences of transition.

5.1.5 *'Vulnerable Pupils' in Relation to Previous Literature*

Anderson et al. (2000) identified four individual and environmental factors that could affect a pupil's transition to secondary school; gender, prior problem behaviour, low academic achievement and low SES. Each of the participants 'slotted' into at least one of these four categories. For example, Jackson's (participant 5) behaviour escalated when he moved to secondary school and he was at risk of permanent exclusion, *'well, I thought it was going to be a new slate, but really it's not....yea I thought it was going to be a fresh start....but it's not because I am still misbehaving'*. It is interesting to note, that of the six pupils interviewed, Jackson was the only Black Caribbean pupil. Within the last decade, research has shown that in the UK there appears to be a disproportionate number of exclusions of minority ethnic boys (DfES, 2000). The DfES (2000) report found that Black Caribbean pupils are just over three times as likely as White pupils to be permanently excluded from school. The current research indicated that this national trend appears to be continuing. It could be

suggested that African Caribbean male pupils may be more susceptible to unwitting but systematic racial discrimination within educational settings with the application of sanctions, disciplinary procedures and exclusion policies.

This research explored vulnerable pupils' experiences of transition. It has shown that the vulnerable pupils' within this research experienced intense levels of anxiety during transition and had difficulty coping and adjusting to all the new changes.

However, it must be noted that all the pupils within this research managed to cope on some level. When interviewed (autumn term of Year 7), all of the pupils were still in education, i.e. they had not been excluded nor had they become a school-refuser.

Anderson et al. (2000) stated that gender was one of the most important and influential factors in determining a successful transition for a pupil. The authors suggested that girls are more emotionally vulnerable during the period of transition as they appear to place more of an emphasis on peer relationships. Transition can disrupt many of the friendships created in primary school. Lizzie and Sarah found leaving old friends behind particularly difficult. Lizzie experienced feelings of loss and grief when she had to leave her primary school and say 'goodbye' to her friends, *'because like I was upset, and I am still upset from leaving my primary school'*.

Ofsted (2005) noted that vulnerable pupils consisted of children with a disability or looked after children. It has been previously noted that Lizzie has spent a period of time in care in the past. From reading and analysing her transcript, it is clear that Lizzie may be presenting with some attachment issues and has difficulty coping with change. In many cases, children who are/have been in care have experienced many changes and disruptions in their lives. This can greatly affect their emotional well-being and their ability to develop positive relationships with others. It is apparent that

Lizzie was having difficulties forming friendships and developing relationships with her teachers after moving to secondary school.

At the beginning of this thesis, I identified how each of the participants 'slotted' into different definitions of 'vulnerable'. However, over the course of the research my opinion of the term 'vulnerable' has altered. Each of the participants was identified by their parents and educational professionals as being 'vulnerable' and at risk of negative outcomes around the transition period. Some of the pupils still show elements of being vulnerable (Jackson, Sarah and Lizzie), while others appear to be adjusting well to secondary school and no concerns have been raised regarding their well-being. Now, post transition, Ryan, Ollie and Mandy do not appear to be as vulnerable as were prior to their move to secondary school. Therefore, it can be suggested that being vulnerable is not about being in a category (social economic status, gender, cultural background, educational experiences) – it is something that can affect any individual depending on their circumstances and challenges around the transition they are going through. Perhaps vulnerable pupils are often vulnerable because they have lacked a solid emotional base in their early years (Lizzie). In other words, being vulnerable is not about particular circumstances but about the emotional resilience and support (both at home and in school) that is in place to cope with what life presents.

5.2 Critical Analysis of the Research and Implications for Future Research

As with every research, there are a number of strengths and limitations that should be addressed.

5.2.1 Strengths of the Research

A considerable strength of this research is that it was one of the first research projects to qualitatively analyse the transitional experiences of children who were identified as vulnerable by primary schools. None of the participants within this research were necessarily considered 'vulnerable' by the Local Authorities or society's standards, i.e. they did not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. These are the children that may have 'slipped through the net'. Representing the voices of vulnerable children is only one small element of expressing the voices of entire groups of vulnerable children or young people. Future research could explore the transitional experiences of young people who are considered vulnerable for a variety of reasons, such as having a physical disability, hearing or visual impairment, learning difficulties, children in care, and young people who have experienced bereavement. This would increase professionals' knowledge about transition for vulnerable groups of young people.

Another strength of this research explores the methods I used to gather opinions and thoughts from vulnerable groups of pupils with social, communication and language difficulties. This research highlighted how the appropriate use of visual aids can be successful to assist communication with vulnerable pupils and children.

This research used qualitative methods and analysis with pupils who had social communication difficulties. All too often, these pupils are excluded from qualitative research as many researchers may believe the pupils cannot provide rich data due to the nature of their difficulties. Mandy (participant 3) had significant anxiety issues and chose not to speak outside of her home. She chose to write her answers to the questions during the interview. It is beyond the scope of this research to conduct a literature review into previous research examining selective mutism. There is little qualitative research exploring the views and experiences of children and young

people with select mutism. The current research indicates that there is huge potential for using such methods and analysis with children and young people with select mutism.

This research has demonstrated that interviewing vulnerable children can yield rich and valuable data. It also highlighted that children wish to have their views listened to and want to participate in research. The qualitative methods used within this research can be used in further research with vulnerable children and young people, in order to gain an insight into their worlds and a deeper understanding of their experiences.

A unique aspect of this research was that I was known to each of the participants prior to conducting the research. Working with each of the participants individually and within a group setting I had a better understanding of each of the participants' needs. I learnt that some participants struggled to express themselves through speech, while others had difficulties processing auditory information. Therefore, I believe I was able to cater for each of their needs to appropriately include them in the research, for example; allowing them time to process information, stopping myself from 'jumping in' and rephrasing the same question and the use of visual aids to further promote communication. I believe that my prior knowledge of each of the participants greatly benefited this research as rich data was gathered.

5.2.2 Limitations of the Research

It is important to explore some of the limitations of the current research. A limitation of this research surrounds the restrictive nature of the single interview process for each participant. It could be argued that it may have been more valuable to examine the experiences of the pupils over a period of time. Interviews spread out over a

period of time, for example, prior to transition and starting the Transition Project, 1 month after transition, 6 months after transition and at the end of Year 7 would have allowed me to develop a greater rapport with the participants. These interval interviews would have also allowed me to gather more in-depth data about the pupils' experiences of their own transition. A more rounded investigation of their lives pre and post transition may have provided additional enlightening evidence that could contribute to the differences in their accounts of their transitional experiences. This may produce interesting data relating to the experience process of psychological change. It could have also been useful and insightful to interview the pupils' parents or carers and teachers to gain a fuller and holistic understanding of the experiences of transition viewed from different stakeholders.

Another limitation of this research that must be acknowledged is the 'variable' and 'changeable' nature of the Transition Project. The project was mostly delivered within the primary school setting with some support from the Educational Psychology Team. Each primary school had training about the project prior to participation. Although it was clear that each school had their own understanding and way of delivering the project. This led to a variety of different events experienced by the pupils. For example, the project suggests that each pupil have two person-centred-reviews, one at the beginning of the project and the other at the end. When interviewing the pupils, it was clear that not all of the pupils had two reviews. The only constant/consistent element of the project that each participant experienced was the 'group' aspect, which ran in the summer term of Year 6. All of the pupils interviewed believed that the project only consisted of the social skills group and were unaware of the support and interventions their primary schools had put in place as part of the project also. This aspect of the project could account for the wide

variety of different experiences presented by the pupils. For future research within this area, or focusing on this particular Transition Project, it could be suggested that future researchers carry out detailed research on the pupils of just one primary school to ensure that each participant received the same amount of support and intervention.

If the members of the Transition Project wished to 'roll out' the project nationwide they would have to consider fidelity of the project. Dumas, Lynch, Laughlin, Philips Smith & Prinz (2001) noted that 'an intervention can be said to satisfy fidelity requirements if it can be shown that each of its components is delivered in a comparable manner to all participants' (p.38). This would develop an evidence base of effectiveness, clearly identifying the nature of the intervention and ensuring that its undertaking is the same in each setting. Currently, the Transition Project is unable to make such fidelity claims.

It could be suggested that my prior knowledge and relationship with the pupils interviewed may have impacted on the data. It may be possible that the pupils might have disclosed more information to somebody that was unfamiliar to them. In most research studies, the researcher is unknown to the participants. The fact that I was known to the participants is a unique aspect of this research. As the participants of the current research were considered to be vulnerable, it could be argued that it was beneficial they were interviewed by somebody with whom they had already developed a relationship with. This way they may feel comfortable speaking with a person they previously knew.

My gender must also be recognised. I am a young female in her mid-twenties. The sample consisted of six pupils, three young males and three young females. Perhaps

the young males, who made up half of the sample, may have spoken more openly and freely to a male researcher.

Other transitional experiences could be explored in future research. As Lizzie (participant 4) noted that she will continue to experience transition and change throughout her school life, *'I feel like because like I am still moving on through the school.... and I probably will still use it (transition project) when I go through to year 11, up to year 11 and then I'll have another transition project, from year 11 to college'*. Future research could investigate vulnerable young peoples' experiences of the transition from school to college, or from college to University. This type of research would greatly increase professionals' knowledge about the psychological processes of transition throughout adolescence.

5.3 Implications of Research for Educational Practice

There are many implications of the current research which would be of benefit to many professional working with vulnerable children through transition. Educational professionals can use the findings to further develop their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the transitional experiences of vulnerable children. It was recognised above, that whilst the experiences of the six participants within this research cannot be generalised to all vulnerable groups of children, the themes that emerged from the individual and group analysis can be explored and considered when working with children prior and post transition. In particular, thought and possible reflection should be given to the sense of 'struggling to cope' with the many changes the pupils' experienced while making their transition. Teachers in primary and secondary schools and parents also could be made more aware of how these struggles lead to children feeling emotionally vulnerable.

The findings of this research stress the importance of listening to the child's or young person's voice. A lot of the anxieties the pupils' expressed about their transitional experiences could seem like small insignificant details to many of the adults in their lives (making new friends, getting lost in their new school, being bullied, relationship with teachers, increased workload etc). However, to the children these were the anxieties that dominated their lives for a period of time. The pupils' main priority was to fit in and belong in their new school. These issues are related to Maslow (1970) hierarchy of needs, which suggested that people require their safety and belonging needs to be met before they can engage with their own personal development and learning. Secondary school staff should place more of an emphasis on friendship and relationship building in the first few months of Year 7, to ensure all Year 7 pupils develop a sense of belonging and fitting in to their new school, so that they can engage fully with their learning in the following months.

The findings of this research suggest that many pupils have a lot of misconceptions about secondary school which tend to increase their level of anxiety. Pupils can develop a range of myths about secondary school from various sources which can adversely affect their transition. Lizzie (participant 4) noted that some of the misconceptions she had developed about secondary school stemmed from media resources, such as books and films, where some students experienced very serious bullying, or others had to tackle a lot of homework. It could be suggested that to dispel these types of myths and misconceptions about secondary school, primary school staff should provide the opportunity for Year 6 pupils to talk to secondary school pupils from a variety of different secondary schools. This will allow the Year 6 pupils a chance to investigate their assumptions about secondary school with people whose responses are deemed more trustworthy than that of adults.

An interesting finding of this research explored how anxiety provoking the open/induction experience can be for vulnerable children. This highlights the importance of supporting some pupils through the open day experience, such as discussing what will happen before the event and debriefing afterwards. All adults and professionals working with vulnerable children should be aware of how such 'open days' in secondary schools can cause immense anxiety and tension for a child. Work should be done to minimise these anxious feelings prior to the event so that the child can feel confident about attending the open day.

One of the key messages from this research is listening to the child's or young person's voice. It is clear that from this research, that to further develop professionals understanding of improving transitions, listening to children and young people is an invaluable resource, and should be encouraged in future research within this topic area.

This research highlighted how qualitative research methods can be used successfully with vulnerable young people who have social, language and communication difficulties. It could be argued that in the past, research has had a tendency to use quantitative methods with vulnerable children and young people, as it may have been thought that this was the only method of eliciting their opinions about a certain topic. The successful use of semi-structured interviews and the application of visual aids to prompt communication within this research, show how future researchers can use qualitative research methods with vulnerable groups of children and young people. This research has shown that such methods can be used effectively to appropriately listen to these children's' and young peoples' experiences.

The findings of this research will have further implications for the Transition Project team. It was discovered throughout the course of this research that each participant had a different experience of the Transition Project depending on which primary school they attended. Some primary schools appeared to have been more pro-active with implementing the individual 'action plans' that were agreed in the transition reviews. It could be suggested that other primary schools, may not have felt confident about implementing the action plans. Therefore, as the Transition Project develops in the future, the Transition Project team could ensure that each primary school is appropriately supported throughout each stage of the project through visits to the school, telephone calls and emails, to ensure that each primary school is implementing the appropriate interventions agreed in the transition review. This could guarantee that each pupil participating in the project would have similar experiences of taking part in specific interventions designed to support them through their transition.

5.4 Dissemination of Findings

The findings of this research were presented in a conference for Designated Teachers of Looked After Children. The conference focused primarily on transition between primary and secondary school. The research was well received by all who attended the conference.

The findings will be disseminated to the Educational Psychology Team of the London Borough in which this research was conducted. These findings will further develop the Educational Psychologists knowledge about the transition experiences of vulnerable children. It is hoped that this qualitative research, will encourage other members of the team to engage and undertake future research.

The findings will also be fed back to the members of the Transition Project team. The findings will again further develop the team's understanding about transition from primary to secondary school. These findings also may influence how the project is developed in the future. For example, the findings of this research suggest that some of the children felt they were obliged to participate in the project and it appeared that they were not properly consulted with prior to participation. In the future, members of the Transition Project could devise a 'participant information sheet and consent sheet' which each pupil could complete with a trusted adult to ensure informed consent.

I will send a feedback sheet to each of the pupils who participated in this research. This sheet will summarise the main findings from the research in a manner that is accessible to the participants i.e. using appropriate language etc. This sheet will also thank the pupils for their participation in the research.

5.5 Impact of the Research on the Transition Project

This research has already greatly impacted on the work carried out by the members of the Transition Project. Throughout the course of the research, I have provided feedback to the members of the project. These findings have been reported to have greatly influenced the project this year. The members of the project became aware of the importance of reviewing the work that was being done. For example, after interviewing each of the pupils I discovered that many of the pupils had had different and varying experiences of the Transition Project, i.e. not all the pupils had had a Transition (person-centred) Review. Various reasons as to why this may have happened have been previously addressed. To ensure that all pupils had at least one Transition Review, the members of the Transition Project asked each primary

school for the notes and the 'action plan' agreed at each pupil's review. Admittance into the Transition Group (run in the summer term by members of the Transition Project) occurred only when a pupil's 'action plan' from their review was received. Receiving the 'action plan' was evidence that a review meeting had occurred and was one way for ensuring that all pupils attended at least one review while participating in the project.

The findings of this research suggested that some of the pupils felt obliged to participate in the project. This finding made not only myself but the other members of the project feel uncomfortable. As a result, this year the members of the project have taken extra time to consult appropriately with the pupils about participating in the project. Instead of meeting only once to discuss the project, the members of the project have met with the current pupils at least twice to talk about their participation in the project. It was agreed that the members of the project would devise a 'child-friendly' leaflet explaining the project to potential participants in the future.

The above paragraphs highlight how the research has currently impacted on the project. After discussions with the members of the Transition Project, it was agreed that the project itself needed a 'review'. It was argued that for future funding to be sustained it would be important to evaluate the 'overall effectiveness' of the project from the different stake-holders view point i.e. the pupils, the schools, the parents and the members themselves. Discussions about the details of this evaluation are still to take place. It can be suggested that this research influenced others to think more dynamically about the project and encouraged change and action to take place.

5.6 Implications for Educational Psychologists

There are some implications from this research that can impact on Educational Psychologists (EPs) practice.

5.6.1 Importance of Informed Consent

It is believed that the findings of this research highlight the importance of obtaining informed consent from pupils with whom EPs work with. Professional and individual EPs should ensure that all children and young people make a fully informed and free choice about working with an EP. It could be suggested that on occasions EPs work with individual or groups of children and young people who may not fully wish to work or talk to an EP. Perhaps these children or young people do not fully understand the role of the EP and could consider the EP an intimidating stranger. As noted previously, it was assumed that all the pupils who had participated in the project had given their consent and had full knowledge of the project. The members of the Transition Project had asked that all primary schools brief the pupils about the project prior to participating in it. More should be done to ensure pupils are made aware of the different types of support they are offered so that they can make informed decisions as to whether they wish to participate in certain interventions.

EPs should consider the importance of informed consent when working with children and young people to ensure that they feel safe and secure. It is also believed if a child or young person understands the nature of the EPs work and agrees to work with them, that child or young person could benefit more from direct EP intervention than if they reluctantly engaged with the process. To help children and young people understand the role of the EP, some Educational Psychology Services have

distributed 'child-friendly' leaflets to schools explaining the nature of EP work and involvement (Woolfson & Harker, 2002).

5.6.2 Supporting Vulnerable Pupils' through Transition

This research could also help EPs to consider the different ways they could support vulnerable children through transition to secondary school. The pupils from this research found it useful and helpful when they were given practical information and 'tips' about making friends (one of the groups sessions focused on 'conversation starters') and developing their social skills, *'because like you gave us like tips of like try and do this but try not to do that'* (Ryan, participant 6), *'yea the conservation things, and use it to make friends. I wanted to use that time to make friends'* (Ollie). EPs are in a good position to offer this type of support. They could work individually or with groups of young people, develop a social skills programme relating to transition or provide training on social skills development to schools. EPs are well placed to help vulnerable young people explore their positive and negative transitional experiences. EPs could use solution focused techniques to help children identify their own coping strategies that they may have used during transition and consider how these strategies could be further developed and extended.

Based on the findings of this research, it could be suggested that individual EPs, teaching staff and parents become familiar with useful resources (books and websites) which they could share with children to help them cope with transition. For example Appendix 14.

Through consultative work and practice, EPs could work with parents and school staff to explore any concerns relating to transition, such as dispelling myths and

misconceptions, developing social skills, developing a possible 'buddy system' or 'circle of friends', developing and identifying coping strategies and deducing anxiety.

The present research has indicated that there are many different factors that can support a vulnerable child through transition. Although the sample size of the current research was small, it was found that supportive factors differ from pupil to pupil, according to the individual needs of that particular child. Therefore, it should be stressed that there appears to be no single 'transition programme' that is applicable and appropriate to every pupil and will support all pupils through transition. As a result, a holistic approach could be recommended that acknowledges that a successful transition is influenced by a variety of factors and that also caters for children on an individual basis.

EPs are well placed within the Local Authority and multi-agency level to work with school staff and systems to ensure that the transition of vulnerable pupils is regarded as a priority and implement appropriate interventions and support systems to help facilitate successful transitions.

5.7 Reflections on the Research Process

In this section of the thesis I will consider how I have been involved in the research process. I have previously discussed how I choose this topic area within Chapter 2. I will reflect on my thoughts about data collection and the process of analysis. I will also consider my position within the research and how I may have impacted on and influenced the nature and process of the research and its findings (Willig, 2001).

A significant reflexive factor during the research process is associated with my assumptions and preconceptions of the research itself. From my own personal

experience of the transition from primary to secondary school and from reading literature focusing on transition, I assumed that most children experience feelings of great anxiety and angst. I became aware of my assumptions throughout the data analysis phase of this research when I began to develop an understanding of the pupils' experiences of transition. This understanding has revealed a number of personal insights including a realisation of the extent to which I have obviously internalised my own negative experiences of transition and have tended to project them onto others. This has been an enlightening experience for me, as I am now aware of how my own personal experiences truly influence my beliefs.

As a member of the Transition Project team, I had an invested interest in the pupils' experiences of transition and their experiences of the Transition Project itself.

Therefore, my invested interest and previous assumptions may have influenced the research questions and interview process. Also my assumptions may have had a bearing on the analysis process and the interpretation of the data. I endeavoured to keep an open mind while reading and analysing each transcript. I tried as much as possible to acknowledge my assumptions and 'bracket them,' i.e. leave them on the side. I wanted and tried to fully listen and make sense of the phenomena as it emerged as opposed to projecting my assumptions onto the data.

I have to acknowledge that the findings from this research formed in a context which is related to my life, assumptions and experiences. Another researcher would have perhaps told a different story of the pupils' experiences of transition. I hope that I have been able to offer a glance of the pupils' experiences of transition and the Transition Project, despite the findings being influenced by myself. It can be argued that it is impossible to access the lived experiences of the pupils directly, the second a researcher begins to relate their experiences they are interpreting it as they do so.

I must admit I was not prepared for the level of immersion into the data that this research and IPA required. I initially presumed I would be able to analyse the data over few days and have the findings chapter written up within a week. As I started analysing I discovered that in order to go beyond a superficial level of interpretations I needed to step back from the data and allow myself time for reflection upon my own assumptions. I also must confess that I found the nature of qualitative research overwhelming at times. This was my first experience of qualitative research and I believe I entered into it rather naively. The depth of the information and data given to me by the pupils was wonderful and terrifying at the same time. I was excited to learn more about their experiences but felt overwhelmed by the responsibility I put on myself to do the research justice. Overall, I enjoyed the research process, especially learning and using IPA and developing my interviewing skills. I relish the fact that IPA research focuses primarily on the idiographic and interpretative phenomenological ideals. This methodology and analysis has allowed me to gain a better understanding of individual lived experiences and ultimately become a better psychologist.

While writing this chapter, I came across some notes and reflections I had made throughout the course of this research. What surprised me was how difficult I found the interview process. As Trainee EP and from my previous employment in educational settings, I am aware that I have developed skills that are required for interacting well with children. However, within this research, I found my role as researcher and interviewer somewhat restrictive. I knew and had worked with each of the participants prior to the research interview. The participants had known me in my role as TEP where I am a naturally expressive and animated person. I felt confined and restrictive by my role as researcher and the interviewer. For example, if

one of the participants shared something positive about his/her transition, I wanted to be very enthusiastic and show my delight. However, I felt that showing these emotions could bias the interview so I tried to remain as neutral as possible. However, upon reflection, I must acknowledge that behaving in a more reserved manner yielded rich data from each of the participants. Perhaps, instead of viewing my role of researcher as restrictive, I could see it as another way of working. Throughout my career I am aware that there will be times when showing emotions and being animated will help with me develop rapport with children, while at other times acting in that manner may not be appropriate. This research has allowed me to gain further insight into my own development and progression as an EP.

5.8 Conclusion

Despite decades of research and policy intervention aimed at improving the transitional experiences of vulnerable pupils, transition itself is still problematic within the UK (Noyes, 2006). Overall, research has shown that the majority of children make a smooth transition to secondary school (Alston et al., 1985). They settle in well, adjust to new routines and make friendships. However, for a small minority of pupils, transition is a challenging time. There is a growing evidence base to suggest that the primary to secondary school transition is a time where some pupils need to be highly supported (West et al., 2010). This minority of children can usually be characterised by the following features; prior problem behaviour, low SES, low achievement and attainment, children in care and mental health issues.

This research explored six vulnerable pupils' experiences of transition and their experiences of a Transition Project using semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed using IPA.

Some of the findings of this research can be related to previous literature. The theme 'Struggling to Cope' emerged from each of the pupils' transcripts and is well documented in the transition literature (Compas et al., 2001). Feelings of loss and grief and longing for primary school also became apparent from the analysis. This related to research focusing on the many changes pupils make when they leave primary for secondary school (Roderick, 1993). Friendships appeared to be one of the biggest factors in aiding pupils to feel comfortable and settled in their new secondary school. Each of the pupils spoke about friends they had either left behind in primary school and relationships that they had made in secondary school. These findings provide further evidence that positive relationships with peers are strongly related to pupils' positive attitudes about school, self-esteem, depression and feelings of anxiety. An important finding suggests that some children find the open/induction days in their new secondary school particularly anxiety provoking. This contradicted previous research suggesting that attending open days can reduce children's anxiety about attending secondary school. It was suggested that vulnerable children in particular require support prior to and after the induction day so that their high levels of anxiety can be monitored and controlled. This research indicated that children identified as vulnerable have significant levels of anxiety surrounding transition. The research has shown that some pupils have difficulty coping and adjusting to the changes the new secondary school brings.

The pupils' experiences of the Transition Project were mixed. Overall, the majority of pupils found that the project 'helped' them in some way with their transition to secondary school. Some pupils related that the project increased their confidence and self-esteem. On the other hand, many of the pupils felt as if they were forced by the adults in primary school into participating in the Transition Project. This lead to

feelings of 'being out of control' and some pupils were angry at the thought of being put forward for the project. This finding has significant implications not only for the members of the Transition Project team but for all professionals working with children and young people. It could be suggested that informed consent must always be sought when working with children and young people. As discussed previously in this chapter, the findings of this research have implications for the work and practice of Educational Psychologists and educational professionals working with vulnerable children throughout the secondary transition period.

The use of qualitative research methodology and IPA reveals a more detailed picture about transition and contributes to a better understanding of what it is actually like for vulnerable pupils to go through the transition from primary to secondary school. The research was exploratory and aimed to improve the understanding of educational professionals about transition. The findings of this research were based on my interpretations of the data and were not claimed to be generalizable across groups. However it is hoped that these findings provide a further insight into the experiences of vulnerable children. It is also hoped that these findings can inform educational professionals about identifying vulnerable children prior to transition and offering specific and tailored support to individual pupils so that they can feel confident and ready for their move to secondary school.

The ideographic nature of this research showed that there were a variety of different experiences. Individual differences could account for each participant having a different experience of transition and of the Transition Project. This suggests that no single 'transition programme' is appropriate for each and every pupil. Therefore, it can be stressed that vulnerable pupils should be supported using an individual holistic approach that acknowledges that successful transitions are influenced by a

variety of factors, including; social and emotional skills, attainment and achievement, family issues and even economic conditions.

In conclusion, transition to secondary school is a difficult and challenging time for vulnerable pupils. These pupils need to be supported during this time to prevent negative outcomes occurring e.g. becoming a school refuser or being excluded. Having a greater understanding of transitional experiences, professionals working with vulnerable children can have a deeper and more meaningful insight, so that they can appropriately support children through their move to secondary school. This research has shown that vulnerable pupils have high anxiety levels surrounding transition and participating in a Transition Project can reduce their levels of anxiety and help them feel more prepared for secondary school.

References

- Alexander, H. A. (2006). A View from Somewhere: Explaining the Paradigms of Educational Research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 40*, 205-221.
- Alston, C., Sammons, P., & Mortimore, P. (1985). *The views of primary pupils*. London: ILEA Research and Statistics.
- Altricher, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers Investigate their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research*. London, Routledge.
- Anderson, L. W., Jacobs, J., Schramm, S., & Splittgerber, F. (2000). School Transitions: Beginning of the end or a new beginning? *International Journal of Educational Research, 33*, 325-339.
- Armstrong, D., & Galloway, D. (1996). How children with emotional and behavioural difficulties view professionals. In R. Davies & D. Galloway (Eds.), *Listening to children in education*. London David Fulton Publishers Ltd.
- Ashton, R. (2008). Improving the transfer to secondary school: how every child's voice can matter. *Support for Learning, 23*, 176-182.
- Backe-Hansen, E. (2002). Young people between home and school. In R. Edwards (Ed.), *Children, home and school: Regulation, autonomy or connection?* London: Routledge.
- Baker, B. L., Blacher, J., & Olsson, M. B. (2005). Preschool children with and without developmental delay: Behaviour problems, parents' optimism and well-being. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 49*, 575-590.

- Barone, C., Aguire-Deandeis, A. I. & Trickett, E.J. (1991). Mean-ends problem solving skills, life stress, and social support as mediators of adjustment in the normative transition to high school. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 19, 207-225.
- Berndt, T. J., & Mekos, D. (1995). Adolescents' perceptions of the stressful and desirable aspects of the transition to junior high school. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 5, 123-142.
- Bloyce, J., & Frederickson, N. (2012). Intervening to improve the transfer to secondary school. *Educational Psychology in Practice*. 28, 1-18.
- Brammer, L. (1992). Coping with life transitions. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 15, 239-253.
- Brewin, M., & Statham, J. (2011). Supporting the Transition from Primary School to Secondary School for Children Who Are Looked after. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 27, 365-381.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brykczynska, G. M. (1989). *Ethics in Paediatric Nursing*. UK: Nelson Thornes Ltd.
- Campbell, A. & Ntobedzi, A. (2007). Emotional Intelligence, Coping and Psychological Distress: A Partial Least Squares Approach to Developing a Predictive Model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 3, 39-54.
- Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (1996). The social development model: A theory of antisocial behaviour. In J. D. Hawkins (Ed.), *Delinquency and crime: Current theories* (pp. 149–197). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Charlton, T. (1996). 'Listening to Pupils in Classrooms and Schools,' in R. Davie, &

- D. Galloway, (Eds.), *Listening to Children in Education* (pp. 49-63). London : David Fulton Publishers.
- Compas, B.E. (1987). Coping with stress during childhood and adolescence, *Psychological Bulletin*, 101, 393-403.
- Compas, B.E., Connor-Smith, J. J., Saltzman, H. Thomsen, A.H. & Wadsworth, M.E. (2001). Coping with stress during childhood and adolescence; Problems, progress and potential theory development. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 87-127.
- Cotterell, J.L. (1986). The adjustment of early adolescent youngsters to secondary school: Some Australian findings. In M.B. Youngman (Ed.), *Middle schooling transfer: Problems and proposals*. London: NFER Nelson.
- Collins, K., & Nicolson, P. (2002). The meaning of 'satisfaction' for people with dermatological problems: Reassessing approaches to qualitative health psychology research. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7, 615-629.
- Conners, C. & Stalker, K. (2003). *The views and experiences of disabled children and their siblings :a positive outlook*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN General Assembly, 1989, COREC
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Designs: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. California: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cronin, P., Ryan, F., & Coughlan, M. (2008). Undertaking a literature review: a step-by-step approach. *British Journal of Nursing*, 17, 38-43.

- Cullingford, C. (1999). *The Causes of Exclusion: Home, School and the Development of Young Criminals*. London, Kogan Pag.
- Deatrick, J.A., & Faux, S.A. (1989). Conducting qualitative studies with children and adolescents. In Morse, J. M. (Ed.). *Qualitative nursing research: A contemporary dialogue* (pp. 185 –203). Rockville, MD: Aspen.
- Demetriou, H., Goalen, P., & Rudduck, J. (2000). Academic performance, transfer, transition and friendship: listening to the student voice. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 425-441.
- DfE (2012). Retrieved May 2012 from <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0064387/childrens-minister-unveils-plans-for-education-of-sen-pupils>
- DfEE (1999). The Impact of School Transitions and Transfers on Pupil Progress and Attainment. Retrieved September 2011 from www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR131.doc
- DfES (2001). Access to Education for children and young people with Medical Needs. Retrieved September 2012 from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFES%200732/2001>
- DfES (2003). Evaluation of the Vulnerable Children Grant. Retrieved July 2011 from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR592.pdf>
- DfES (2004). Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners. Retrieved August 2011 from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2004-five-year-strategy.pdf>
- Disabled people using Scope services, (2002). London: Scope. Retrieved August

2011 from: <http://www.scopus.org.uk/publications>

Dumas, J. E., Lynch, A. M., Laughlin, J. E., Philips Smith, E., & Prinz, R. J. (2001).

Promoting intervention fidelity. Conceptual issues, methods, and preliminary results from the EARLY ALLIANCE prevention trial. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 20, 38-47.

Eatough, V. and Smith, J.A. (2008) 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', in

C. Willig and W. Stainton-Rogers (eds) (2008). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, pp. 179–94. London: Sage.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (1993). Negative effects of traditional middle schools on students motivation. *Elementary School Journal* 93, 553-574.

Eiser, C. & Twamley, S. (1999). 'Talking to children about health and illness', in

Murray, M. and Chamberlain, K. (eds) *Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods*, London: Sage.

Elias, M. J. (2001). Easing transitions with social-emotional learning. *Principal Leadership*, 1, 20–22.

Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (1998). Schoolboy frictions: feminism and 'failing' boys, in D. Epstein, J. Elwood, V. Hey and J. Maw (eds) *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Evangelou, M., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). What makes a successful transition from primary to secondary school? Department for Children, Schools and Families. Research Report DCSF-RR019.

- Every Child Matters (2003). Retrieved July 2011 from
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM5860.pdf>
- Fenzel, L. M. (2000). Prospective study of changes in global self-worth and strain during transition to middle school. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 20, 93–116.
- Fisher, J. M., & Savage, D. M. (1999). *Beyond experimentation into meaning*. Lostock Hall: EPCA Publications.
- Fleetwood, S., & Ackroyd, S. (2004). *Critical Realist Applications in Organization and Management Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1990). *Hermeneutics, Religion and Ethics*. US: Yale University Press.
- Galton, M., Gray, J., & Rudduck, J. (1999). *The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment*. Annesley, Notts: Department for Education and Employment. Research Report DfEE-RR131.
- Galton, M., & Willcocks, J. (1983). *Moving from the primary classroom*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8, 597-607.
- Graham, C., & Hill, M. (2003). *The Transition to Secondary School*. Report of a study funded by the Esme Fairbairn Charitable Trust, Glasgow Centre for the Child & Society, University of Glasgow.
- Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2006). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: secrets of the trade. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 5, 101-117.
- Greig, A., Taylor, J., & MacKay, T. (2007). *Doing Research with Children*. London: Sage.

Guardian (2012). Retrieved May 2012 from

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/may/09/queens-speech-2012-full-text>

Hanline, M. (1991). Transitions and critical events in the family life cycle:

Implications for providing support to families of children with disabilities.

Psychology in the Schools, 28, 53-59.

Harter, S. Whitesell, N. R. & Kowalski, P. (1992). Individual differences in the effects of educational transitions on young adolescent's perceptions of competence and motivational orientation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29, 777-807.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. Trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson.

Oxford: Blackwell.

Hendry, L., & Kloep, M. (2002). *Lifespan development: resources, challenges and risks*. Thomson Learning: London.

Hertzog, C.J. & Morgan, P.L. (1998). Breaking the barriers between middle school and high school: Developing a transition team for student success. *NASSP Bulletin*, 82, 94-98.

Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigation*. New York: Humanities Press.

Ireland, L. & Holloway, I (1996). 'Qualitative Health Research with Children',

Children & Society 10, 155-164.

Jindal-Snape, D., & Foggie, J. (2011). A holistic approach to primary – secondary transitions. *Improving School*, 14, 5-18.

Jordan, JA., McRorie, M. & Ewing, C. (2010) Gender differences in the role of

- emotional intelligence during the primary-secondary transition. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 15, 37-47.
- Kaplan, A., Gheen, M., & Midgley, C. (2002). Classroom goal structure and student disruptive behaviour. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 191–211.
- Lewis, S. (2008). Promoting Children's Wellbeing: Policy and Practice, *Children & Society*, 23, 79-80.
- Lord, S. E., Eccles, J. S., & McCarthy, K. A. (1994). Surviving the junior high school transition: Family processes and self-perceptions as protective and risk factors. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 14, 162-199.
- Masson, J. (2004). The legal context. In S. Fraser, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett & C. Robinson (Eds.), *Doing Research with children and young people* (pp. 43-58). London: Sage Publications.
- McDougall, P. & Hymel, S. (1998). Moving into Middle School: Individual Differences in the Transition Experience. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 30, 108-120.
- McGee, C., Ward, R., Gibbons, J., & Harlow, A., 2003. *Transition to secondary school: A literature review. A Report to the Ministry of Education*. Hamilton: University of Waikato, New Zealand.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans C. Smith. Great Britain: Routledge.
- Midgley, C. & Maehr, M.L. (2000). *The transition to high school: Report to participating schools and districts*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Morrison Gutman, L. & Midgley, C. (2000). The role of protective factors in

- supporting the academic achievement of poor African American students during the middle school transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29, 223-248.
- Morrow, V., & Richards, M. (1996). The ethics of social research with children: An overview. *Children and Society*, 10, 90-105.
- Mullins, R. L. & Chapman, P. (2000). Age, gender and self esteem differences in adolescent coping styles. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 140, 252-256.
- Murdock, T. B, Anderman, L. H. & Hodge, S. A. (2000). Middle-grade predictors of students motivation and behavior in high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 15, 327- 351.
- NCH Software (2012). Retrieved September 2012 from <http://www.nchsoftware.com>
- Newman, T. (2004). *What Works in Building Resilience*. Ilford: Barnardos.
- Nicholls, G. & Gardner, J. (1999). *Pupils in Transition: Moving Between Key Stages*. Routledge:UK.
- Noyes, A. (2006). School transfer and the diffraction of learning trajectories. *Research Papers in Education*, 21, 43-62.
- Ofsted (2002). Changing Schools: Evaluation of the effectiveness of transfer arrangements at age 11.
- Ofsted (2005). Breaking the barriers. Brick by brick: Every Child Matters and vulnerable groups.
- Ofsted (2008). Good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools.
- Ofsted (2010). Children missing from education.

- O’Kane, C. (2000). ‘The Development of Participatory Techniques: Facilitating Children’s Views about Decisions which Affect Them’, in P. Christensen and A. James (eds). *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*, (pp. 136–59). London: Falmer Press.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (2000). *Questionnaire, Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London: Continuum .
- Pellegrini, A. & Blatchford, P. (2000). *The child at school: Interactions with peers and teachers*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Pointon, P.(2000). Students' views of environments for learning from the primary to the secondary school, *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 375-382.
- Potter, N. (2001). *Looking forward to teaching: A team approach to teaching in Years 9 and 10*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Pratt, S. & George, R. (2005). Transferring friendships: Girls’ and boys’ friendships in the transition from primary to secondary school. *Children and Society*, 19, 16-26.
- Qualter, P., Whiteley, H. E., Hutchinson, J. M., & Pope, D. J. (2007). Support the Development of Emotional Intelligence Competencies to Ease the Transition from Primary to High School. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 23, 79-95.
- Quinn Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. New York: Sage.
- Reicher, S. (2000). Against methodolatry: Some comments on Elliott, Fischer and Rennie. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 39, 1-6.

- Rice, F., Frederickson, N., & Seymour, J. (2011). Assessing pupil concerns about transition to secondary school. *British Journal of Educational*, 81, 244-263.
- Robinson, C., & Kellett, M. (2004) 'Power', in Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M., & Robinson, C. (eds.). *Doing research with children and young people*. (pp. 81-96). London: Sage.
- Robson, C., (1993). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers*. Blakewell, Cambridge, USA.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. US: Blackwell Publishers.
- Roderick, M. (1993). *The path to dropping out: Evidence for intervention*. Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Russell, P. (2003). 'Access and achievement or social exclusion?' Are the Government's policies working for disabled children and their families? *Children and Society*, 17, 215-225.
- Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity. Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147, 598-611.
- Sanders, D., White, G., Burge, B., Sharp, C., Eames, A., McEune, R., & Grayson, H. (2005). *A study of the transition from the foundation stage of key stage 1 (OfES Research Report SSUI200SIFRI013)*. London: DfES.
- Sarte, J. P. (1956). *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Great Britain: Dickens & Co Ltd Northampton.
- Schaffer, H. R. (1996). *Social Development*: Blackwell Publishers.
- Schagen, S., & Kerr, D. (1999). *Bridging the gap? The national curriculum and*

progression from primary to secondary school. Slough: National Foundation for Education Research.

Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and Criticism: and Other Writings*. UK: Cambridge University Press

School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) (1996). Key Stage 2 Assessment Arrangements. London: SCAA.

Schumacher, D. (1998). The transition to middle school. ERIC Educational Clearing House : US.

Scottish Parliament (2000), Education (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc.) Act 2000.

Shepherd, J., & Roker, D. (2005). An evaluation of a 'transition to secondary school' project run by the National Pyramid Trust. Undertaken by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA).

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research Projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63–75.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage.

Simmons, R. G. & Blyth, D. A. (1987). *Moving into adolescence: The impact of pubertal change and school context*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Smith, J.A. (1999). Identity development during the transition to motherhood: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 17, 281-299.

- Smith, J.A. (2004). Reflecting on the Development of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and its Contribution to Qualitative Research in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1, 39–54.
- Smith, J.A. (2007). Hermeneutics, human sciences and health: Linking theory and practice. *International Journal Of Qualitative Studies On Health and Well-Being*, 2, 3-11.
- Smith, J.A. (2008). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J.A. & Dunworth, F. (2003). Qualitative methodology. In J. Valsiner and K. Connolly (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychology*. (pp.603-621). London: Sage.
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory Method and Research*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J. A., Harre, R., & Langenhove, V. L. (1995). *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J.A. & Osborn, M. (2003) Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods*. (p.57-80). London: Sage.
- Sparkes, A. (2001) Myth 94: Qualitative health researchers will agree about validity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 538-552.
- Starks, H. & Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory, *Qualitative Health Research*, 17, 1372-1380.

The Children's Act (2004). Retrieved September 2011 from

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/1106-2004PDF-EN-01.pdf>

The Children and Young People's Unit (2001). Retrieved September 2012

from <http://www.cypu.gov.uk>

Tobbell, J. (2003). Students' Experiences of Transition from Primary to Secondary School. *Journal of Educational and Child Psychology*, 20, 4-14.

Trend, R. D. (2007). Gender-related consequences of early school transfer at 11+years. *Educational Studies*, 33, 193–208.

UNICEF (2004). *"What about the Boys?"* In The State of the World's Children 2004. New York: UNICEF.

Wall, K., Higgins, S., & Packard, E. (2007). *Talking about Learning: Using templates to find out pupils' views*. Devon: Southgate Publishers.

Wampler, R. S., Munsch, J., & Adams, M. (2002). Ethnic differences in grade trajectories during the transition to junior high. *Journal of School Psychology*, 40, 213–237.

Ward, L. (1997). *Seen and Heard: Involving disabled young people in research and development projects*: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Ward, R. (2000). Transfer from middle to secondary school: A New Zealand study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 365-374.

West, P., Sweeting, H., & Young, R. (2010). Transition matters: Pupils' experiences of the primary-secondary school transition in the West of Scotland and consequences for well-being and attainment. *Research Papers in Education*, 25, 21-50.

- Wigfield, A., Eccles, J. S., MacIver, D., Reuman, D. A., & Midgley, C. (1991). Transitions during early adolescents: Changes in children's domain-specific self-perceptions and general self esteem across the transition to junior high school. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 552–565.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Methods in Psychology* (2nd Edition). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Woolfson, R. C., & Harker, M. E. (2002). Consulting with children and young people: Young people's views of a psychological service. *Educational & Child Psychology*, 19, 35–46.
- Zeedyk, S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school: Perceptions of pupils, parents and teachers. *School Psychology International*, 24, 67-79.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

This sheet gives you some information about a research project that you are been invited to take part in

Research is being undertaken by: Kate Mathews

Date:

Dear

Hi! My name is Kate Mathews and I am training to become an Educational Psychologist (somebody who helps make school better for children and young people). I am a student at University of East London and as part of my training I am doing research about the Transition Project that you took part in last year.

You might remember me - I worked with you on the Transition Project last year. Here is my picture to help you remember who I am!!



I hope that this research will help the people who work on the Transition Project to make the project even better for Year 6 pupils. What you tell me might help these people improve the project and help other pupils who take part in the project in the future.

With your help I want to find out about: your experiences of the Transition Project and your experiences of moving to secondary school.

If you want to be a part of this project this is what will happen:

I will meet with you only once.

1. I will arrange to meet you (either at your school, at home or at my office, whatever suits you) for a chat lasting no longer than 45 minutes. Here we can talk about your experiences of the Transition Project and your experiences of moving to secondary school.
2. At this meeting I can answer any questions you might have about what I am doing and why I am doing it.

When I talk with you I will record what you say so that I remember what you have told me using a tape recorder. If you are not sure about this then you can chat to me about it before we begin talking when we meet.

What you say will be kept between us. The only time that I would have to speak to anyone else would be if you tell me something that means either yourself or somebody else is in danger. If you get upset by talking about any of the things I want to find out then we can stop straight away. If you want to stop talking for any reason we can also stop straight away.

When I have talked to other pupils that have taken part in the Transition I will write about what I have found out, but I will not use your real name and I will make sure that nobody can work out what you said.

What to do next: Making a choice

1. If you are interested in taking part in this research then let your parents or guardians know now.
2. If you would like to know more before you make a choice you can ask your parents or guardians to contact me with any questions you may have.
3. Remember - you do not have to take part in this study if you do not want to.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.



KATE MATHEWS

Appendix 2 - Consent Form for Participants

Consent Form for Participants (Pupils)

This is the CONSENT FORM that you will need to fill in if you want to take part.

Title of thesis: Exploring pupils' experiences of a transition project using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

If you want to take part then please complete this form. You can work through this with your parents or guardians or if you would like we could work through it together before we begin our chat.

Please choose a box to  for each question.

1. I have looked at the information about the project and I understand what it is about.

☐

Yes

☐

No



Signature

2. I understand that I can stop talking about something if I want to.

☐

Yes

☐

No



Signature

3. I understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I don't want to.

☐

Yes

☐

No



Signature

4. I understand that my answers to questions will be recorded on audio tape:

☐

Yes

☐

No



Signature

5. I understand that what I say will be kept private and only shared after it has had my name or any other details that could identify me taken out. The only time that Kate can tell anybody else my name or any details, is if I say something which means that me or someone else is getting hurt.

☐

Yes

☐

No



Signature

6. I understand that I can change my mind about taking part at any time.

☐

Yes

☐

No



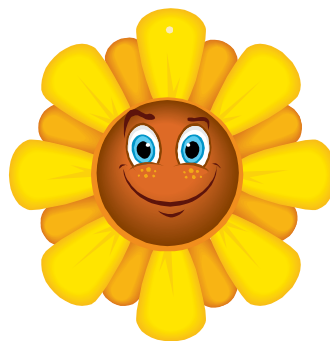
Signature

7. I agree to take part in the Transition Research Project.

Signature.....

Date

Thank you very much!



Appendix 3 – Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians

Research Information Guide for Parents/Guardians

Title: Exploring Pupils' Experiences of a Transition Project using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Date:

Dear

My name is Kate Mathews and I am a student at the University of East London training to become an Educational Psychologist.

You may remember me – I worked with _____ on the Transition Project while he/she was in Year 6.

_____ is invited to take part in a research study in which I am looking at his/her experiences of the Project and of Transition.

The pupils' who participated in the Transition Project involvement in this research is important and will give them an opportunity to put forward their perspectives of the Project. Their views will go towards increasing the knowledge base of transition from primary to secondary school.

It is important you understand why this research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

1. Why is this research being done?

This research will attempt to explore the pupil's experiences of the Transition Project, post transition. The research will also attempt to increase the knowledge base around factors affecting pupils at the time of transition from primary to secondary school.

2. Why this particular pupil?

This particular pupil has been chosen because they participated in the Transition Project. Their opinions about the Project will hopefully help the professionals who work on the Project to improve and further develop the Project. Their views will also hopefully help other pupils taking part in the Project in the future.

3. What does this study involve?

- I will meet with your child only once.
- I can meet them at their secondary school, at home or at my office, whatever would suit them best.
- I will arrange to meet them for a chat **lasting no longer than 45 minutes**. During this time I will answer any questions the pupil may have about what it is I am doing. I will also talk to the pupil about their

experiences of the Transition Project and about their transition to secondary school.

When I interview them I will record what they say using a tape recorder. What they say will be kept between myself and the pupil. The only time that I would break confidentiality would be if they tell me something that means either themselves or somebody else is in danger.

We will talk about their experiences of the Project and moving to secondary school **BUT** if they get upset at any time during the talk we can stop straight away.

When I have talked to other pupils that have previously taken part in the Transition Project, I will write about what I have found out, but I will not use their name and I will also make sure that nobody can work out who said what. The pupil's responses will not be linked to their name, school or any personal details.

4. *What if I have more questions?*

If you have any questions or you want to discuss this further then please contact Kate Mathews on:

Email:

Contact Number:

Address: Educational Psychology Team, Children Services

5. *Who should I contact if I am worried about this study?*

This study has been approved by the University of East London Research Centre Ethics Committee, Graduate School, Docklands Campus, Tel: +44 (0)2082233000. Anyone with worries or complaints about the way this study is carried out should contact myself initially at the above contact details or Merlin Harries (Ethics Committee Rep.) at the above address and phone number.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

Please complete the form below if you give permission for your child to participate in the research. Please find a stamped and addressed envelope attached.

Many thanks

Kate Mathews

Appendix 4 – Consent Form for Parents and Guardians

Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

I (your name) give my permission for
..... (pupil's name) to participate in the Transition Research
Project.

Signature Date.....

Name of your Child's Secondary School.....

Thank you very much.

Appendix 5 – Ethical Approval



MISS KATE MATHEWS
64 BRACKENBURY ROAD
LONDON
W6 0BD
Date: 11 April 2011

Dear Kate,

Project Title: *Exploring Pupil's Experiences of a Transition Project Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)*

Researcher(s): *Kate Mathews*

Supervisor(s): *Mark Turner*

I am writing to confirm that the review panel appointed to your application have now granted ethical approval to your research project on behalf of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'UEL Code of Good Practice in Research' (www.uel.ac.uk/ga/manual/documents/codeofgoodpracticeinresearch.doc) is adhered to.

Yours sincerely,

Merlin Harries

University Research Ethics Committee

Email: m.harries@uel.ac.uk

Appendix 6 - Further Information about the Transition Project

Additional Information about the Transition Project

Training was provided to Year 6 class teachers and to school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) during the autumn term. This training introduced the Transition Project and discussions took place on how each school would implement the project.

The Transition Project consists of two strands.

Stand One: Whole Class Programme - This strand of the project has been running successfully since 2005/6. The programme was designed to reduce pupil anxiety about the transition to secondary school and support pupils to develop skills in the area of speech and language, organisation and coping. The programme is delivered by Year 6 teachers who have attended a one-day training course in the programme.

Strand Two: Individual Strand - Each school that took part in the training was invited to select two pupils from Year 6 who they felt would benefit from this strand of the programme. It was decided amongst the Educational Psychology Service that the children referred to the project should be on the SEN register of their school but not have a statement of special educational needs, as it was believed that children with a statement should have the support they need put in place. This strand of the project is targeted at pupils who may otherwise 'slip through the net' and not receive a great deal of support due to time constraints placed on teachers.

Once the pupils were referred, this strand of the programme consisted of a Transition Review (person centred review) in the autumn term, a bespoke intervention package in the spring term (delivered by the school and Educational Psychologists working on the project), group sessions run by Educational Psychologists and a final Transition review in the summer term.

Transition Reviews (Person-Centred Reviews)

The Transition Reviews are based on the principles of 'person centred reviews' (PCRs). In this respect the reviews intend to promote meaningful participation of pupils in decisions that affect their lives. This process empowers the pupil, provides crucial insight into their lives and reinforces a harmonious and inclusive school ethos. Pupils, key staff and family members and other relevant professionals are invited to the review. The review is based around a discussion of the pupil's positive attributes, what is working well in the current situation and what the current issues and worries are. The discussion is facilitated using solution-focused principles and an action plan is agreed by all parties present at the review. The pupils are encouraged to "take charge" by selecting background music, refreshments and so on, which has a benefit of allowing them to feel more relaxed and comfortable within the setting.

Previous Evaluation on the Transition Project – Individual Strand

Rating scales pre and post the Transition Project have been used in the past.

Time – Line of Evaluation

Time	Evaluation Measure
Pre-Transition Project (Autumn Term Year 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Resilience and Supporting Independence Rating Scale• Pupil Target Setting with Members of the Transition Project using a Rating Scale
Post-Transition Project (Summer Term Year 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Resilience and Supporting Independence Rating Scale• Pupil reviews Targets with Members of the Transition Project using a Rating Scale

Examples of both the Building Resilience and Supporting Independence

Questionnaires can be seen below.

Building Resistance, Supporting Independence

This is a questionnaire about you and your life it will be used to see how things have improved after you have....

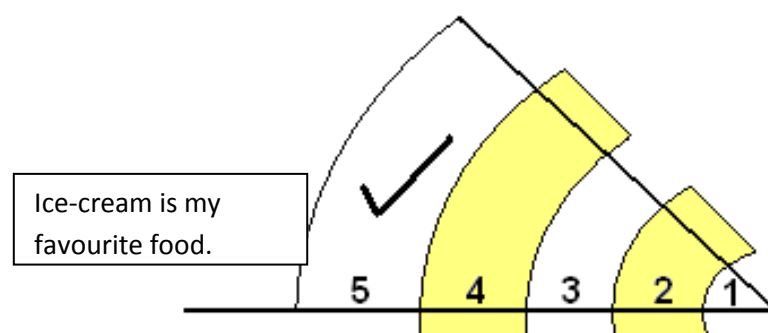
This questionnaire is to find out how things are for you now. You will be asked to fill it in again to see how things have improved.

Name

Date of birth

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

For example,



1 = Strongly disagree

5 = Strongly agree

Your use of time

Help

10. I am out with friends with 'nothing fun to do' three or more nights per week.

1. My family and I get on well and I am willing to ask their advice.

2. People at my school care for me and they are helpful

9. I spend three or more hours per week doing activities.

3. I know people who are helpful and encourage me to do well.

8. People I know show positive and good behaviour.

4. I do useful and helpful things in my community.

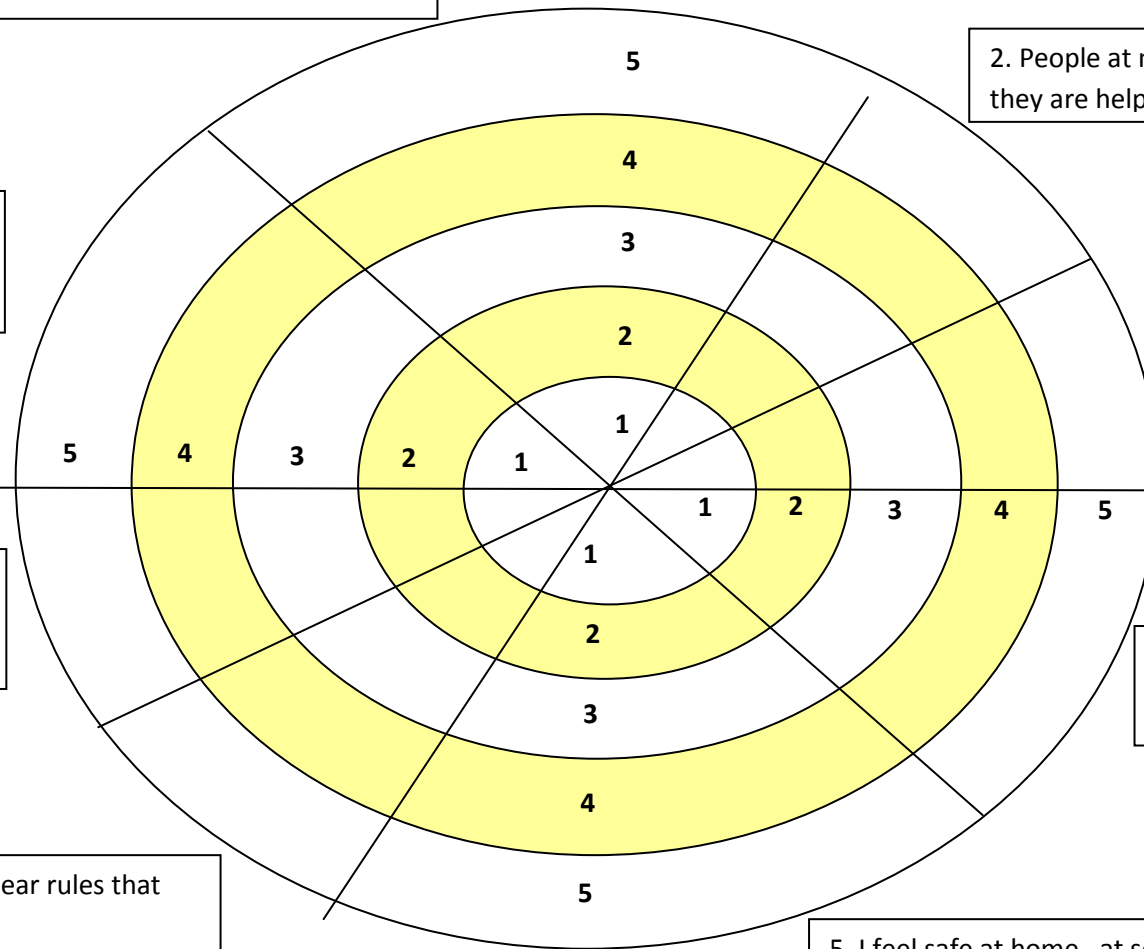
7. My school has clear rules that are followed.

5. I feel safe at home, at school and in the area that I live.

6. My family has clear rules and consequences, they know where I am

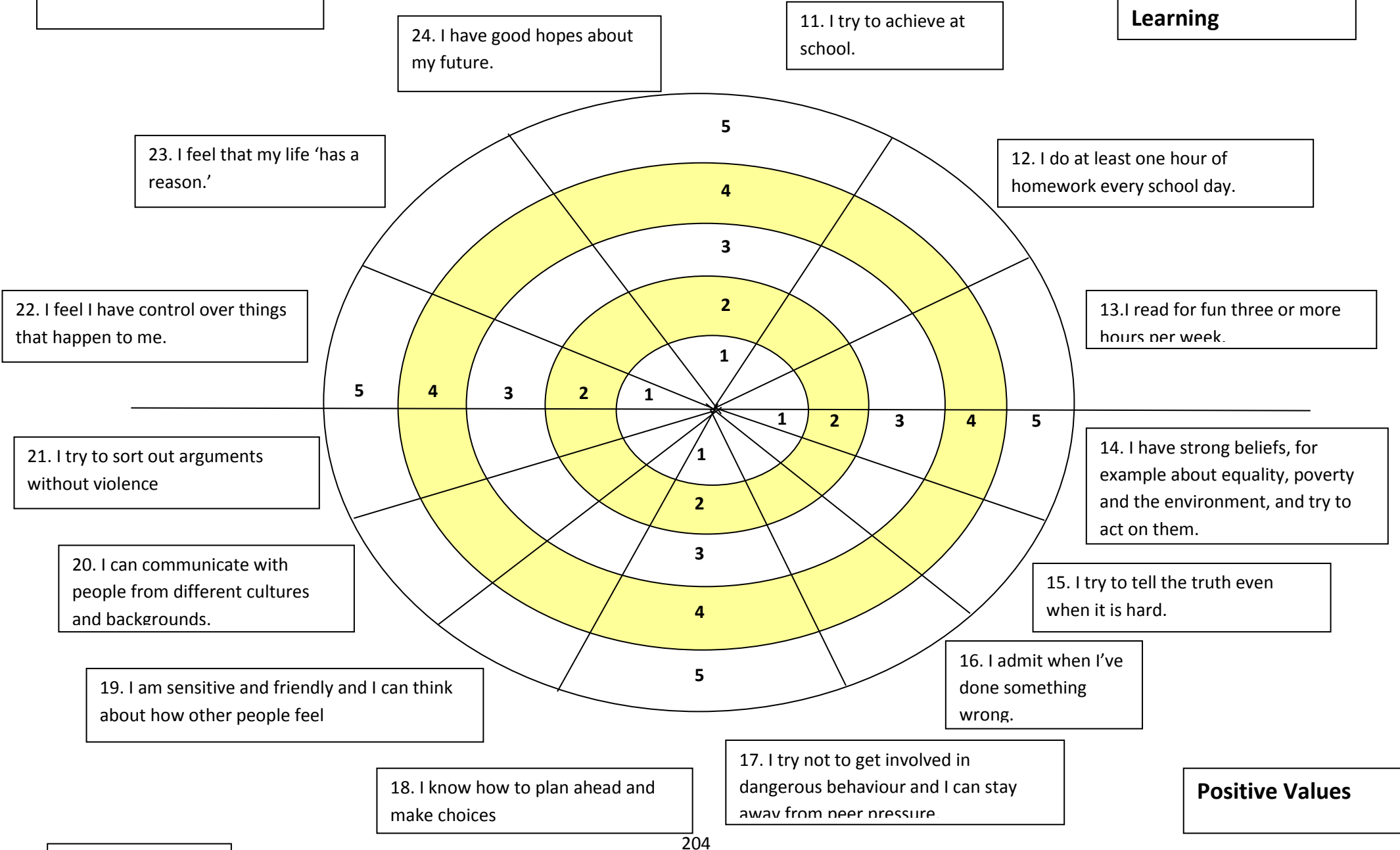
Boundaries and Consequences

Confidence



Positive about Life

Commitment and Learning



Social skills

Positive Values

Transition Project Pre and Post Transition Project Scaling Sheet

Initial session with pupils taking part in the Targeted Support Individual strand of the Transition Project.

Aims:

- To brief pupils about the project (information sheet in pack) and in particular the Transition Reviews.
- To work with pupils to indentify two targets that they would like to work towards to support their transition to secondary school, e.g. friendships, managing anger etc.
- To collect baseline data (BRSI measure and scaling)

Pre-Transition Project (Autumn Term)

Target 1 = _____

Target 2 = _____

Scaling

Target 1:

On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is low and 10 is high) how would you score your self on your 1st target **now**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1-10 where do you hope to get to by the end of year 6?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What do you think could help you get there?

Target 2:

On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is low and 10 is high) how would you score your self on your 2nd target **now**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1-10 where do you hope to get to by the end of year 6?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What do you think could help you get there?

Post – Transition Project (Summer Term)

Remind pupil of the two individual targets set prior to the Transition Project

Target 1: _____

Target 2: _____

Target 1: On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is low and 10 is high) how would you score your self on your 1st target **now**?

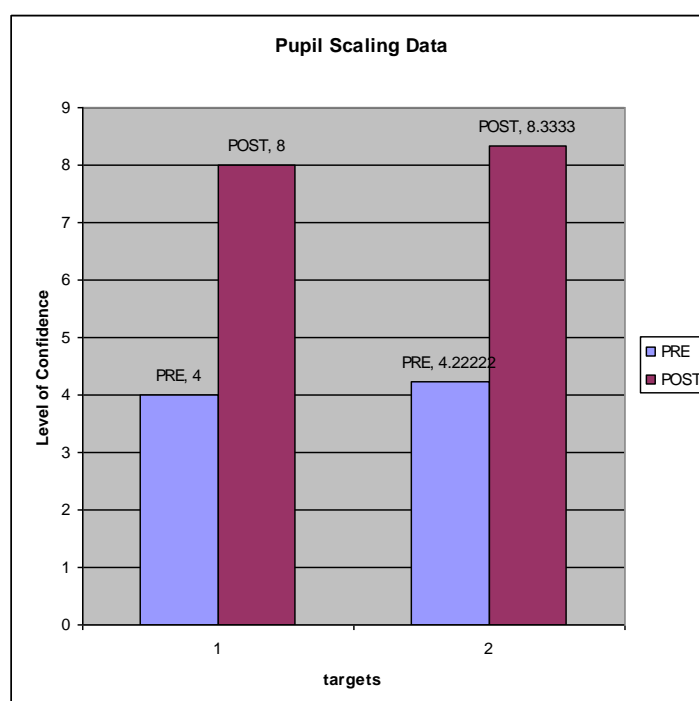
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Target 2: On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is low and 10 is high) how would you score your self on your 2nd target **now**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

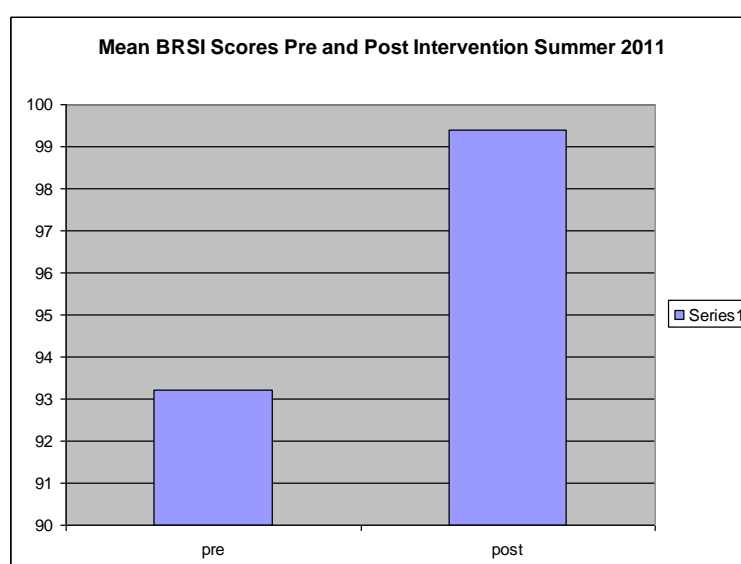
Evaluation of Transition Project (2010-2011)

Transition Project using Rating Scales on Targets Set



The graph indicates that the pupils' level of confidence increased after the Transition Project on their two targets.

Evaluation using the BRSI Measure



This graph indicates that the pupils' levels of self confidence and self-esteem increased after participating in the project.

Appendix 7 - Visual Aids used during Interviews

Primary School



Moving to Secondary School



Secondary School



Appendix 8 – Transcription from Participant 1

Transcription – Pupil 1

R: Hiya

P1: Hi

R: What is that music?

P1: it's the bell

R: oh is it the bell?

P1: yea

R: oh wow I have never heard a bell like that before!

P1: (laughs)

R: how are you doing?

P1: good

R: good! It's good to see you again. My hair is a bit darker isn't it?

P1: (laughs) yea

R: yea yea great.

So this is the tape recorder

P1: oh

R: and it's on now – ok?

P1: ok

R: so we will keep an eye on the time and we will get going

So how are you doing?

P1: good

R: it is so good to see you again! Do you want to take off your bag? Make yourself comfortable.

P1: ok, thanks

R: thank you so much for coming back to see me again, its really lovely to see you in your new school,mmm, and thank you for saying you would take part in the research i am doing

P1: ok

R:mmmm, just to let you know, that you are free to leave, if if you kinda feel actually no i don't really want to do this anymore or don't really want to talk about that , you are free to say 'stop', ok i don't want to do this anymore, and that is no problem, m, and just anything we talk about will be typed up and i will change your name, so nobody can work out who said what, ok?

P1: ok. Thats fine

R: ok, so nobody will know that X said this, ok so I am going to change your name and make sure you say anything that anyone can identify you and ill make sure that i can ill change that so no one will know who you are, ok?

P1: ok.

R: ok, so this is, we are going to have a bit of a chat about the Transition Project, do you remember that?

P1: yea, in primary school.

R: that's it. i know it was a bit of time ago but we are going to try and think about it today. And what i am really interested in, is your experiences of that, ok, so like what you thought, what you felt, what all of those things that you thought about the Transition Project. Ok?

P1: yea, ok

R: so there is no right or wrong answers, ok, so im really interested in what you thought, ok?

P1: umm

R: ok, so this may seem like a very odd conversation. I know right now i am doing a lot of the talking, but what i would like and if it is ok with you, is for you to say as much as you can, ok

P1:yea

R: and mmm, just take your time, there is no rush and take your time speaking and let your thoughts come to you

P1: (laughs)

R: (laughs) and mmm, if you want to say as much as you can about things, yea?

P1: yea, ok.

R: ok, do you have any questions for me about this?

P1: no

R: no? Ok, so what i have got are these (loud noise) oh, i seem to be dropping things.

P1: (laughs)

R: i seem to be taking my time also, sorry. So i have got (research is organising visual aids)

How is your day going so far?

P1: good

R: yea, were you just in assembly?

P1: yea

R: what was that about?

P1: talking about the first term

R: oh right, was it a year7 assembly

P1: yea,

R: ok, was it a nice assembly?

P1: yea

R: so how long was it?

P1: mmmm, about 15minutes

R: ok, so have you had lunch now?

P1: yea

R: yea ok, i would hate for you to be hungry talking to me

P1: laughs

R: sorry i have a bit of a cold, so i may have to blow my nose sometimes through this.

Ok, so i have got some pictures.

This doesn't look like your primary school, i know that because i have been to your primary school, but let's pretend that this was your primary school, ok?

So I would like you now to think back to your primary school, ok, think of all those things, and, what, what, tell me what your primary school was like?

Now i have got a pen here, if you wanted to write down some words and then we can talk about them, don't worry about spelling, or, don't worry about anything like that,

(pupil 1 begins writing words on the primary school visual aid)

So you have written small..... friendly..... kind.... ok so you have written 3 words there, so lets talk about them.

So what do you mean by friendly?

P1: mmmm, the people are friendly, the teachers are nice and kind

R: um, (pause)

What else was friendly about your primary school?

P1: pause, mmmm, it was like, mm, everybody knew each other, so it wasn't worrying about friends and.....(long pause)

R: um, and what was that like?

P1: good but small

R: ok, what do you mean by small?

P1: very small and you were like had to be in one place and you couldn't go to another (pause)

R: ok, and was that important to you?

P1: sort of

R: um

P1: like, even, like even between lessons they wouldn't let you go inside or go in the computer room, they just made you go outside and thats all

R: ok, ok, and so that's what you mean by small as well is it? Is there anything else you mean by small?

P1: about school, the actual building was quite small, (pause)

R: yea, umm

P1: it was small but it was ok, it very very very nice though....ok

R: ok, and you wrote the word kind aswell?

P1: the teachers are nice and explaining it things carefully

R: um

P1: it was nice, pleasant everybody knows each other and you can easily make friends (um)

R: what was that like?

P1: good, i liked it. I knew everybody.....

R: um, ok, so what other words would you use to describe your primary school?

P1: mmmmmmmmm (pause) mmm crowded.

R: crowed?

P1: like there was four years and liek the classroom was crowed and the like outside was crowed and even the lunch area

R: um, what did that make you feel like?

P1: crowed and squased.....

R: ok

P1: and sometimes not really much to do

R: what do you mean?

P1: like if you going play tennis like or something or football and its all full there, like people all playing the equipment and its full.....that sort of stuff

R: ok, so any other things you would say about your primary school?

P1: not really no

R: ok so you are happy to say it was small, friendly, kind and crowed? Yea? Anything else?

P1: no i don't think so

R: ok, so now we will move onto to your secondary school, so again....actually this kind of looks like it, so can you imagine yourself in secondary school now,

Do you want to write, or I can write, whatever you would like?

P1: ill write

R: ok, can you think of some words used to describe your secondary school?

P1: mm ok. (begins writing on secondary school visual aid)

R: you have written small/big, what do you mean by that?

P1: well, the building is a lot bigger than my primary school, but because i know the building now, its still a bit small

R: ok, so once you have gotten to know the building it seems small?

P1:yea

R: so what other words would you use to describe your secondary school?

P1:i cant think of the word

R:don't worry about it, that is fine. You can just tell me more about your secondary school?

P1: well at the start i didn't really understand how to find which classroom i go to, and where to go and stuff and who to go to and what my teachers....there was a lot of worries

R: um

P1: yea i had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....

R: what do you mean by hard?

P1: hard, well hard to cope with everything

R: um

P1: things changing, that was hard

R: um (long pause) anything else?

P1: mmmm, i would say in secondary school there is also something to do, like out here there is tennis, table tennis, football mmmm and there is computers all around.....mmmmmmmmmm and there is loads of people around so you can always talk and stuff(long pause)

R: um

P1: yea

R: so what kind of people?

P1: friendly people, my age (long pause)

R: and what is that like talking to them?

P1: good, usually i just find a friend and talk of the rest of...it makes it easier for me

R: easier?

P1: yea, because i am not alone.....(long pause)

R: um, so any words for secondary school?

P1: mmmm fun

R:fun?

P1:the subjects like science, experiments and like DT with, cooking

R: um, you have a big smile on your face when you said 'cooking'?

P1: well actually i have only done one, but like ill start it properly soon after half term. It was good.

R: and, and what what do you think about school being fun?

P1: i just like it being fun, always having something to do and not to be bored

R:it sounds like that is important to you?

P1: yea, i like having something to do

R:um

P1:mmmmm..i can get lonely when I am bored (long pause)

R: whats that like?

P1: hard..... not very nice (long pause)

R: so you have described your school as being small and big and fun and and what was the other one? I have forgotten?

P1: things to do

R:ah yes, any other words?

P1:spaced-out

R:yea?

P1: like i am never, i am never crowed, i am never pushed against someone, i always have a certain amount of space around me....(long pause)

That is better because I don't have to be squashed up against someone, and mixing books and...(long pause)

R: so its better?

P1:yea (long pause)

R: so we have talked about the words you described your secondary school and thank you very much for doing that, now i have an understanding about your secondary school.

P1: yea

R: so now lets think about your very first day at secondary school? What was that like?

P1: it was good and bad (pause)

R: good and bad?

P1: well the making friends part one was ...

R:yea, which one was that?

P1:the bad one....

R:um

P1:because i didn't know anybody, everything was was completely new and different and the good thing was lessons, like that we got a taste of lessons and it was fun and we got time to find the building more

R: ok, what was it like when you didn't know anybody? What did that make you feel like?

P1:mm very sad,

well usually it would happen about the breaks and the lunch times, well usually, for the first day i just eat lunch by myself and i think on the second day

R: um, yea (long pause) what was that like?

P1: it wasn't very nice, i was sad because i was by myself (pause)

But the second day was a bit better

R:um, better? What made it a bit better?

P1:mmm because i knew, i knew it a bit better

R: ok

P1:and the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I found some friends and then every break i usually just came outside and talked to the them and and sat down with them at lunch, just never like being by myself

R: so you made some friends?

P1: yea i have made lots and lots of people, most of them are my friends now
(pause)

R: so whats that like?

P1: nice and happy and comfortable

R:yea

P1: i don't really have any worries, don't really have any problems, just everything is fine, nothing bad is happening

R: ok

P1:its good, im not alone anymore and have no worries

R: it sounds like you seem happy about that?

P1:yea

R:ok, so i am just going to put this one here (moving the visual aids) and this page here, and do you see this big arrow (transition visual aids)?

P1:yea

R:so we have talked about your primary school and we talked about your secondary school and now we are going to talk about your , its called 'moving from primary to secondary school', so think about the time when were thinking about moving to secondary school, what were you thinking?

P1:well i was thinking how am i going to get there, how am i going to meet friends, how am i well going to get to know people, and the building and find my way around

R:um, what was that like having those thoughts?

P1: well...exciting and worrying at the same time

R: exciting?

P1: well i meant that it is a new, fresh start mmmm you don't really have anything to worry about, and you don't really have to.....

Its just a way for you to have, if you don't really get on well in primary school you have a brand new start.

R: so you also said that you found it worrying?

P1: like how like friends, like mainly friends and how am I going to find my way around

R:um what was that like?

P1: worrying and exciting at the same time (laughs)

R: (laughs) so those are the things that you were thinking about moving to secondary school. And so what actually happened?

P1: well usually it was bad, well usually on the induction night it was bad, i talked to some people but i didn't really get to know them and make friends and then i got to know the building a bit better

R:so that was during the induction day?

P1:yea

then i did practice runs going to school in summer and now i know

i take the bus now

R: whats that like taking the bus?

P1: its ok, loads of my friends take the same bus so i always have somebody to talk to

Since there is like that the bus is completely full (laughs) everybody is squashed

I feel very safe, safe and and not very worried because there is lots of people around and i am not the only one

R: um ok

P1:yea

R:ok, so how would you describe moving to secondary school

P1: mmm well it was, it was a bit of a challenge, but then i managed to do it

R: challenge?

P1:i meant that it wasn't easy....

R:um

P1:to make all of those major changes but in the end i managed it

R:so how do you think you managed to?

P1:well because i practiced and iwell sort of figured out solutions

R:like what

P1:like for the bus i did a few practice runs to make sure so i didn't have anything to worry about and like and for getting to know the building well there was the induction and tours

R: um, so that's important?

P1:yea, its been nice and friendly.....it has made me very happy

R:so what has been important about moving to secondary school

P1: well i think mainly mmm the changes

R: yea?

P1: like you in primary school, mmm, you usually don't go on the bus or the walk or the .. you just get dropped off. And like because then there is a whole lot more people.

R: yea

P1:and a whole lot more strangersmmm and you have to cope with all the people being there and.... (long pause)

R:how was that when you first arrived?

P1:it wasn't very good way, the first time but then i kept doing it and i felt more comfortable, then i and then, then like i hardly see somebody i don't know

R: what's that like?

P1: very very useful (laughs)

R: (laughs) useful?

P1: well like I don't like being alone and knowing most of the people, or just, back to what i said i never have nothing to do

And i can ask people if I, if I forgot my homework or if i am going to be a bit late, i can ask friends to help me

So far i think i have manage to cope with all the changes

R: how do you feel about that/

P1: very very good

R:yea

P1:because i don't have any more worries and thats good

R:ok, so you have said that you have coped with the changes

P1:yea

R:ok, so we have talked about you moving to secondary school, mmm and you said lots and lots of things which have been really helpful to me so thank you very much for that, so i now have an understanding of how moving to secondary school was for you. So now we are going to talk about the Transition Project.

P1:yea

R:do you remember that?

P1:yea

R:yea, and mmm what i am interested in is what you thought of it and your experiences of it, so if you want to please say exactly what you thought of it.

P1: ok

well some parts i needed and some parts of it i didn't really need

R: ok

P1: like the games at the start of the group each week, i don't think i needed like because everyone already knew each other and i didn't know if they were strong or weak....(pause)

And the like getting ideas for the conversations, thats, that is the one that helped me most

R: so who first told you about the Transition Project?

P1: my teacher in primary school

R:um, and what were you thinking then?

P1: hurrah! (laughs)

R: what do you mean by 'hurrah'?

P1:like i had a way to tackle my worries

R:yea

P1:and a way to solve them

R: ok, so how did that make you feel?

P1: well, im not sure....(pause)... i felt like well this must be the... now i have all, now i have a way to like tackle it, i have one less worry

R:so you thought it was going to take away some of your worries?

P1:yea

R: what was the first thing you thought about the project?

P1:well i thought, i thought.... i just wondered how what it would be like after meeting friends and how basically the future would be which would be right now

R:ok, so at that time you were thinking about moving to secondary school.

P1:yea

R:so what did you think about being put forward for the project?

P1:well like i thought it was a great idea and i and i definitely wanted to do it and i thought i would enjoy and get to meet new people.

R: what were you feeling then?

P1:i was feeling very nice that, and calm and i just thought about the future and how it would help me

R:ok, so then you had a meeting, do you remember your special meeting?

P1:yea

R:so who was there at your meeting?

P1:my teacher, my mum, mmmmm(pause) i am not sure, some other people from my school

I remember we had chocolate there too

R: yum, that is making me hungry!!

P1: (laughs)

R: what was that meeting like for you?

P1:well that meeting was ok, it made me realise that what was going well and what needed change and stuff i needed help with

R: ok, ok what were you feeling?

P1: i felt like it was good, because i knew what was going well and what i needed, i could cross off some of my lists of worries and i knew what i still needed to work on

R: what was that like for you?

P1:it was quite interesting and good, it made me less worried and it make me think about somethings and then it made me think how am i going to fix those.

R: ok – so what were you thinking before your meeting?

P1: well i was thinking, i was thinking how it would go, what would happened, what kind of things would they talk about

R: and how were you feeling then?

P1: i was feeling a bit stressed but maybe excited

R: ok, so you were feeling a bit stress and excited about the meeting? What do you mean by stressed?

P1:well i didn't know what was going to happen so i was stressed and nervous, but but i was also excited because i thought it could help me with my worries

R: once you left the meeting, you said you crossed off a few worries, how were you feeling the?

P1:well i was feeling better, like i knew i could handle it more (pause)

R:can you tell me a bit more

P1:well since in the meeting like we talked about the problems and the the future and my mum came out with solutions and then it just made me feel like i was already because i knew how to sort it

R:ok, what was that like?

P1:very nice and pleasant and made me relax more (laughs)

R: ok, so then you were put forward to be part of the group?

P1: yea

R: and who told you about that?

P1:my teacher

R:what were you thinking about the group then?

P1: mmm happy

R: happy?

P1: that there was going to be somebody i knew there, so i wasn't going to be by myself, well there was someone from my class and i knew you there

I was excited about meeting new people and getting along with them. I like the snack part too – (laughs)

R: (laughs) so you enjoyed the snacks!

P1:yea

R: what were you feeling before the group?

P1: i was thinking, i was thinking that all i wanted to do was start it. I was told a few weeks before the groups began, so like i wanted them to begin soon because i didn't know what they were going to be like. I wanted to get it over with, so i knew what they were like and get my worries crossed off the list.

R: ok, ok, so then you started the group and it ran for about 5 sessions/weeks.

P1:yea

R: so what was it like to be part of the group?

P1: mmmm i was like i am not the only one who is like this and there is lots more people who have the same problems and worries as me so it didn't make me feel all alone

R:ok, so what was that like for you?

P1: well it made me feel a lot better

R:yea, a lot better?

P1:it made me feel that i am not the only person with worries about secondary school, it was good.

R: and what other things were you thinking about the group?

P1: well i was thinking, i was thinking about how to solve my worries about secondary school and imagine i am there in a few months and in that situation

R: so when you were with other people from different schools that you didn't know, what was that like for you?

P1: mmm well i knew one person there and that helped. Before it was a tiny tiny bit worried because i didn't know what they would be like but then after the first one i then felt fine

R: um, who was at the groups?

P1: i cant remember their names

R: i know it was a while ago! has anyone from the groups come to this school?

P1: no but my best friend went to one of the people from the groups school and i met him and we talked. It was nice to talk to him and to know somebody new.

R: so when the groups finished, what were you thinking then?

P1: i was thinking, i just want to go straight to secondary school and skip a few months, i felt like i just wanted to be there now and practice

R: practice?

P1: yea the conservation things, and use it to make friends. I wanted to use that time to make friends, my main concern was making friends and meeting new people

R: ok, so when do you think the Transition Project finished for you?

P1: what do you mean?

R: when do you think it ended? Lots of people have different thoughts?

P1: well i think it was when i didn't need to use it anymore

R: well that could be it for you. It is different for everybody.

P1: well maybe after the first week or two weeks, when i just... when i made a lot of friends and i don't really need to ... well i wanted to make new ones but i don't really need to use it anymore because i knew some people and i wasn't by myself.

R: what did you feel like when you felt like you didn't need to use the Transition Project anymore?

P1: i just felt more relaxed, calm and everything is going to be alright

R: and did you notice anything different?

P1: yea, that i had about ten times as more friends than i did in primary school. It is very nice to have the friends and i can play with people and talk to them and that is usually what i do every lunch time and break time, just sit with my friends and sometimes they join me.

R: yea, what does that make you feel like?

P1: very nice, i have lots of people to talk too

R: that sounds nice.

So now we have talked a bit about the project, do you think you would recommend the project to someone else?

P1: yea

R: why

P1: because it tells you, like that how to have a conversation with someone you don't know, it tells you techniques and strategies and how to make friends and not to be alone and how to handle bullying

R: anything else

P1: it just basically just tells you how to be a good friend and how to add new friends to your list (laughs)

R: (laughs) list of friends?

P1: yea

R: yea, so how would you improve the project?

P1: mmm maybe with the bullying

R: um

P1: because i don't really need that because everybody is just friends, i don't get bullied

R: um, is there anything else you might change about it?

P1: mmm not really

R: do you think the project helped you moved in secondary school?

P1: yes, because i was able to use some of the techniques ..

R: oh what did you use?

P1: the techniques, it took a few time but after a few times i just used them straight away and began talking to people

R: oh the conversation starters?

P1: yea, i used 'have you watched this?', or like 'what's your next lesson?' and use continue and continue

R: and what was that like when you were using them and talking to new people?

P1: it felt pleasant, i was talking to someone and i wasn't alone, and i was enjoying myself

R: well thank you so much for taking part in the research, do you have anything else to add about moving to secondary school or the Transition Project? Have I missed anything?

P1: well that i feel there is not really anything to worry about, it takes a few days, for some people it takes a few days but then after that everything is fine.

R: um, and what type of advice would you give to a Year 6 student? I mean if you could go back now to yourself a year ago, what advice would you give yourself?

P1: well to make friends, and talk about, talk about, usually everyone talks about school, and i would say to use some conversation strategies

R: any other advice?

P1: think of some conversation topics, to mmm to continue the conversation, so, so, so you will never be alone and you will never just have to end it

Id tell myself i have nothing to worry about, it is all ok.

R: and how did it make you feel saying those things now?

P1: it made me feel like, i have nothing to really worried about and i feel comfortable, i feel fine, i feel happy

R: yea?

P1: yea

R: that is nice! Well thank you so so much for taking part and talking to me today. I really appreciate it.

So this is my first interview, is there anything i could change about the way i was asking questions, or is there anything i could do to improve?

P1: well maybe ask like, what did you do on the first day like what did you do first, ans see if there is something in between that happening

R: ok, so your first day of what?

P1: secondary school?

R: ok, so how would you answer that question?

P1: what did you do on your first day of secondary school?

R: oh i see, so to talk/ask about your first day of secondary school?

P1: yea

R: ok, that is really helpful, thank you.

Do you have any questions about this for me?

P1: no, that is it (laughs)

R: (laughs)

Finished – 42.39 minutes

Appendix 9 – Clustering of Themes

Clustering of themes – Participant 1

Moving to secondary school was a challenge (difficulty v victory)

ok, so how would you describe moving to secondary school

P1: mmm well it was, it was a bit of a challenge, but then i managed to do it

R: challenge?

P1: i meant that it wasn't easy....

R: um

P1: to make all of those major changes

Difficulties (anxieties) - changes

well at the start i didn't really understand how to find which classroom i go to, and where to go and stuff and who to go to and what my teachers....there was a lot of worries

R: um

P1: yea i had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....

R: what do you mean by hard?

P1: hard, well hard to cope with everything

R: um

P1: things changing, that was hard

Victory (Survival) Proud with himself

i meant that it wasn't easy....

R: um

P1: to make all of those major changes but in the end i managed it

R: so how do you think you managed to?

P1: well because i practiced and iwell sort of figured out solutions

So far i think i have manage to cope with all the changes

R: how do you feel about that/

P1: very very good

R:yea

P1:because i don't have any more worries and thats good

Control Issues

Fear of the unknown

:well i was thinking how am i going to get there, how am i going to meet friends, how am i well going to get to know people, and the building and find my way around

Control of own personal space and belongings

That is better because I don't have to be squashed up against someone, and mixing books and...(long pause)

Changes that are happening are out of his control lead to stress and anxiety

: well at the start i didn't really understand how to find which classroom i go to, and where to go and stuff and who to go to and what my teachers....there was a lot of worries

Being in control = safe

then i did practice runs going to school in summer and now i know

Lack of control in primary school

very small and you were like had to be in one place and you couldn't go to another (pause)

like even between lessons they wouldn't let you go inside or go in the computer room, they just made you go outside and thats all

Becoming more familiar with new places, routines and with changes reduces anxieties, increases feelings of security and safety.

well, the building is a lot bigger than my primary school, but because i know the building now, its still a bit small

I feel very safe, safe and and not very worried because there is lots of people around and i am not the only one

Moving to secondary school releases a sense of freedom/liberty - Hope

Felt imprisoned in primary school

like, even, like even between let lessons they wouldn't you go inside or go in the computer room, they just made you go outside and thats all

Sense of claustrophobia in primary school

so what other words would you use to describe your primary school?

P1: mmmmmmmmm (pause) mmm crowded.

R: crowed?

P1: like there was four years and liek the classroom was crowed and the like outside was crowed and even the lunch area

R: um, what did that make you feel like?

P1: crowed and squashed.....

Identity/growing up/discovering independence

like you in primary school, mmm, you usually don't go on the bus or the walk or the .. you just get dropped off.

New beginnings/fresh start

: well i meant that it is a new, fresh start mmmm you don't really have anything to worry about, and you don't really have to.....

Its just a way for you to have, if you don't really get on well in primary school you have a brand new start.

Attachment Issues - Monophobia (fear of being alone)

Friendship anxiety

What else was friendly about your primary school?

P1: pause, mmmm, it was like, mm, everybody knew each other, so it wasn't worrying about friends and.....

Friendships solves his problems – sense of victory

yea i have made lots and lots of people, most of them are my friends now (pause)

R: so whats that like?

P1: nice and happy and comfortable

R: yea

P1: i don't really have any worries, don't really have any problems, just everything is fine, nothing bad is happening.... its good, im not alone anymore and have no worries

Desperate to make friends = depression

mm very sad,

well usually it would happen about the breaks and the lunch times, well usually, for the first day i just eat lunch by myself and i think on the second day

R: um, yea (long pause) what was that like?

P1: it wasn't very nice, i was sad because i was by myself (pause)

Places pressure on self to form friendship – failing that he hadn't made friends

well usually it was bad, well usually on the induction night it was bad, i talked to some people but i didn't really get to know them and make friends

Fear of being alone/isolation

I am not alone anymore and have no worries

Fear of idle/Lack of stimulation leads to social pain

Importance of being kept busy

i just like it being fun, always having something to do and not to be bored

R: it sounds like that is important to you?

P1: yea, i like having something to do

R: um

P1: mmmmm..i can get lonely when i am bored (long pause)

R: whats that like?

P1: hard..... not very nice

Appendix 10 – Extract of Analysed Transcription

Participant 1 Transcription

Descriptive Notes	Transcription	Interpretive Analysis (potential sub-themes)
People (students) – friendly (knowing people) Teachers – positive Knowing others Worries Friendships Space – following rules Rules – control – issues with space Almost a sense of boredom Physical size of the building Positive about primary school Positive about teachers Explain/help him	So what do you mean by friendly? P1: mmmm, the people are friendly, the teachers are nice and kind R: um, (pause) What else was friendly about your primary school? P1: pause, mmmm, it was like, mm, everybody knew each other, so it wasn't worrying about friends and.....(long pause) R: um, and what was that like? P1: good but small R: ok, what do you mean by small? P1: very small and you were like had to be in one place and you couldn't go to another (pause) R: ok, and was that important to you? P1: sort of R: um P1: like, even, like even between lessons they wouldn't let you go inside or go in the computer room, they just made you go outside and thats all R: ok, ok, and so that's what you mean by small as well is it? Is there anything else you mean by small? P1: about school, the actual building was quite small, (pause) R: yea, umm P1: it was small but it was ok, it very very very nice though....ok R: ok, and you wrote the word kind as well?	People and teachers and separate Worried about making friends Knowing others – sense of security Issues around space Restricted Lack of control – had to be in one place Claustrophobia They wouldn't let, made you go – authority (felt imprisoned) Lack of control – that's all 3x 'very' nice – feeling guilty about speaking badly about primary school?

Knowing others Friendships	P1: the teachers are nice and explaining it things carefully R: um P1: it was nice, pleasant everybody knows each other and you can easily make friends (um) R: what was that like? P1: good, i liked it. I knew everybody.....	Teachers – comfort Cared about
Knowing others	R: um, ok, so what other words would you use to describe your primary school? P1: mmmmmmmmm (pause) mmm crowded.	Nice and pleasant – acceptable only Making friends -Knowing others Familiar elements of primary school Longing for primary school Sense of loss
Space – feeling crowded	R: crowed? P1: like there was four years and like the classroom was crowded and the like outside was crowded and even the lunch area	Moving to secondary school – freedom/liberty Claustrophobia
Space around him – feeling crowded and squashed	R: um, what did that make you feel like? P1: crowded and squashed..... R: ok	Lack of freedom
Lack of activities – sense of boredom – lack of opportunity due to space issues	P1: and sometimes not really much to do R: what do you mean? P1: like if you going play tennis like or something or football and its all full there, like people all playing the equipment and its full.....that sort of stuff	Monotony/dull
Space – people all around	R: ok, so any other things you would say about your primary school? P1: not really no R: ok so you are happy to say it was small, friendly, kind and crowded? Yea? Anything else? P1: no i don't think so	Lack of control over free-time (lunch/break time)

Appendix 11 – Extract of Emerging Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes and Sub-themes with Quotes

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Quote
Struggling to Cope	Struggling with Anxieties	<i>'yea I had a lot of worries. It was really hard.....hard, well hard to cope with everything'. (Participant 1)</i>
	Struggling with Relationships	<i>'well the making friends part one wasthe bad one....because I didn't know anybody' (Participant 1)</i>
	Struggling Leaving Primary School	<i>'well like I felt quite angry....I was like I don't want to go to secondary school' (Participant 2)</i>
New Beginnings	New Identities	<i>'it is a new start and a chance to make new friends and be different....a different person' (Participant 3)</i>
	Sub-theme 2b – Fresh Starts	<i>It's just a way for you to have, if you don't really get on well in primary school you have a brand new start', (Participant 1)</i>
	Misconceptions of Secondary School	<i>because I thoughtlike you're not going to make any friends and you're always going to get into fights, and yea....yea it is a lot better' (Participant 6)</i>

The Pendulum Swings: Accepting Support	Out of the pupils' control	<i>I was a bit nervous.....about the transition project.....because I had to do the project' (Participant 3).</i>
	Questioning one-self	<i>'I feel I didn't need it all, I thought I was normal.....yea I thought I wouldn't have to do anything' (Participant 5).</i>
	Feelings of Readiness and Completion	<i>'I was thinking, I just want to go straight to secondary school and skip a few months, I felt like I just wanted to be there now' (Participant 1).</i>

Appendix 12 – Cross-Case Analysis – Themes and Sub-Themes

Table of Themes and Sub-Themes – Cross-Case Analysis

Participant	Main Themes	Sub-Themes
1	<p>Struggling to Cope</p> <p>Feelings of Liberation</p> <p><i>'I could cross off some of my list of worries'</i></p>	<p>Anxieties and Lack of Control</p> <p>Social Pain</p> <p>Coping with Moving to Secondary School: A Sense of Survival</p> <p>The Imprisonment of Primary School</p> <p>Hoping to form a New Identity</p>
2	<p>Experiences of Loss and Anger</p> <p>Sense of Fear</p>	<p>Longing for Secondary School</p> <p>Anger for Having to Leave</p> <p>Loss of hope</p> <p>Fear of Older Pupils</p>

	<p>Initial Sense of Fear</p> <p>Sense of Relief</p> <p>Developing Confidence and Building Self-Esteem</p>	<p>Fear of being the 'only one'.</p> <p>Fear that there is 'something wrong with me'</p> <p>Fear of others speaking about her</p> <p>Increasing Self-Esteem</p> <p>Increasing Hope and Confidence</p> <p>Sense of Completion</p>
3	<p>Multiple Identities</p> <p>The Journey of Revelation</p>	<p>Identity in Primary School</p> <p>Escaping her past</p> <p>Identity in Secondary School</p> <p>Fearful of secondary school</p> <p>Previous beliefs dispelled</p>

	Being out of her control	<p>Sense of Success and Happiness</p> <p>Being out of her control</p>
4	<p>Clinging to the Past</p> <p>Struggling to adjust to secondary school</p> <p>Attachment to the Transition Project</p>	<p>Feeling of Loss</p> <p>Attachment Issues</p> <p>Relationship to Teachers</p> <p>Physical and Emotional Demands of Secondary School</p> <p>'Average Transition'</p> <p>Continuation of Transition Project</p> <p>Attachment to the Researcher</p>
5	<p>Sense of Pessimism (loss of hope) – <i>'like, there was no sun, but that is London for you'</i></p> <p>A Sense of Bravado</p>	<p>Negative Perception of himself</p> <p>Becoming Disengaged from Education</p> <p>Confirmation from others</p>

Appendix 13 - Extracts from Reflective Journal

September 2011 – Prior to commencing the research

'I am nervous about undertaking this research. I feel there are people who expect big things from it and I am afraid I may not be able to deliver. There is also the expectation that I am personally involved in the project and obviously would like the children to speak positively about it. I know each of the pupils that participated and I hope that they all have settled well into their school. I have to ask myself, 'what do I do if they haven't settled well and are experiencing difficulties?' I must consider my position within this research – i.e. how will the fact that I am known to the participants influence the data? I truly believe that it is a positive thing that the participants know who I am and hopefully will feel comfortable speaking to me. I honestly do not know how the participants will respond to my questions. I hope that they engage with the interview process and relax into conversation with me.'

October 2011 – Reflections after conducting the first interview

'I was very nervous before the interview. I really wanted it to go well. I was very conscious of what I would sound like and how I phrased questions to the participant. I felt like I was being observed through the use of the tape recorder. To be honest I didn't enjoy 'playing the role of the researcher' today as I found it limiting. The participants know me as a bubbly, enthusiastic, lively person. Today I felt as if I had to portray another side of me – a serious research persona. When the participant said some positive things about his secondary school, I wanted to jump up and shout 'wow, isn't that great!' But as a researcher, I was mindful that such a comment might introduce a bias and only encourage the participant to speak of positive things. Perhaps I am emotionally attached to the participants. This is something I had not considered before the research and will need time to reflect on.'

November 2011 – Reflection after conducting the third and fourth interview

'The participants I interviewed today were in complete contrast to one another. One girl chose to write her answers and did not wish to speak to me. While the other girl continued to veer off track and had to be reminded of each question asked. I found today exhausting. Interviewing a child with selective mutism was harder than I expected. The process took longer but I hope it has yielded rich data. I found that today I have developed into a research chameleon. I have to adapt and change my interviewing style to accommodate different types of participants.'

January 2012 – Analysing the data

'I feel completely overwhelmed by the amount of data I have to analyse, interpret and make sense of. I am always questioning, 'I am doing IPA?' Is this rich/deep enough?' These types of questions highlight to me how subjective IPA research is and how I have to be completely honest with how I interpret the data. I have to consider that another researcher may interpret the data differently. Perhaps my own

experiences of transition and my experiences of knowing the participants may influence the data also. Overall, I am thoroughly enjoying analysing the transcripts as I feel more like a psychologist than I do most of the time. It's a wonderful feeling and has cemented the fact that I truly love psychology.'

Books

Moving to Secondary School. Advice and ideas to support transition by Measor, L. & Fleetham, M.

The Parentalk guide to Secondary School by Ellerby, C. & Daymond, N.

Secondary School: A Parent's Guide by Glynis Kozma

Going Up! The No-worries Guide to Secondary School by Jenny Alexander

YP's Guide to Starting Secondary School: New School New Challenge by Steve Holloway

Moving On Up: All You Need to Ease the Transition from Primary to Secondary School (Inspirational Ideas) by Molly Potter

Websites

www.move627.org/

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/assets/downloads/ksmovingup.pdf>

<http://www.lhsp.org.uk/files/cool.pdf>

Interactive Resources

Immersive Education: Kar2ouche (2006) **Moving on: primary to secondary school**. Oxford Publishers

Sensei Solutions (2007). **Moving School? 99½ top tips for easy transition**.

Appendix 15 - Interview Schedule

1. Introductory comments – introduce myself and why I am there, thanking the pupil for taking part, ensuring that they are aware that they can leave at any time and that anonymity will be assured so that no records of the interview will be kept with their name on them. This will also be an opportunity to remind them that they took part in the Transition Project (TP) last year and explain more about the research.
 - I am interested in your experiences of the TP and of moving to secondary school
 - There are no right or wrong answers
 - It may seem like an odd conversation, because you probably will be doing most of the talking – but that's OK
 - Take your time with thinking about what you want to say and take your time with speaking, there is no rush
 - You can say as much as you can if you would like to
2. Transition (use of visual aids)
 - a. Primary School
 - i. What was your primary school like?
 - ii. What did you think about secondary school when you were at primary school?
 - b. Secondary School
 - i. What is your secondary school like?
 - ii. What was your first day like?
 - iii. How was your first month at secondary school?
 - c. Transition
 - i. What words would you describe your move to secondary school?
 - ii. What was moving to secondary school like for you?
 - iii. What has been important about moving to secondary school?
3. Transition Project
 - a. Beginning

- i. Who first mentioned the TP to you?
 - ii. What did you first think about the project?
 - iii. What did you think about being put forward for the project?
- b. Intervention
 - i. Who was at your 'special meeting' (Review)
 - ii. What was the Review like?
 - iii. How did you feel?
 - iv. When did you hear that you were going to be part of a group?
 - v. What was that like?
 - vi. Who was there?
 - vii. What did you think of the group?
- c. Ending
 - i. When did the TP finish for you?
 - ii. What did that feel like?

Prompts: What did you feel, think, and notice (mindfulness)

4. Closure – Thanking the pupils' for taking part in the interview, explaining again how the data will be used, answering any questions they may have and saying goodbye.

It is estimated that each interview should take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded.