Permanent Exclusions: Exploring the Narratives of Primary School Pupils, Their Parents and School Staff.

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Abstract

Permanent exclusion from primary school is an issue of national and local concern, yet previous literature has primarily focused on secondary school experiences of school exclusion. Furthermore, research offering detailed insights into the experience of permanent exclusion from the perspectives of pupils, parents and school staff is limited.

This research aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. Underpinned by values of social justice, advocacy, respect and beneficence, it is concerned with understanding the perspectives of pupils, parents and school staff as a step towards informing future change and reducing exclusion rates.

This study focuses on the stories of two pupils, three parents and two members of school staff who had experienced permanent exclusion from primary school. Using a qualitative design and narrative inquiry approach, data was gathered through unstructured interviews.

Participants' narratives were 'restoried' according to Clandinin & Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space, offering rich and detailed insights into the complexity of permanent exclusion. In the second phase of analysis, the six storied narratives were analysed to explore the extent to which they were connected by shared experiences or storylines.

The findings illustrate how participants' experiences can best be understood as journeys of endurance, entailing various events, interactions and happenings over time. Participants' narratives highlight the emotional impact of permanent exclusion from primary school, in addition to the wider impact it can have on family life. Furthermore, the findings suggest a connection between feelings of competency, agency and the conceptualisation of behaviour.

Applied to eco-systemic theory, this research illustrates the complexity of permanent exclusion from primary school, and how it is experienced through interacting systems, beliefs and discourses of SEN and inclusion. The thesis concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for future research and Educational Psychology practice.

Declaration

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

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

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

I declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own and has been generated as a result of my own original research.

Signature: Date: 23.04.2020

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Acknowledgments

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term in Full
ADHD	Attention Hyperactivity Disorder
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BPS	British Psychological Society
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CIC	Children in Care
DfE	Department for Education
DECP	Division of Education and Child Psychology
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulites
EHCP(s)	Education, Health and Care Plan(s)
EP(s)	Educational Psychologist(s)
EPS(s)	Educational Psychology Service(s)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
LA(s)	Local Authority (Authorities)
LD	Learning Difficulty
LSA(s)	Learning Support Assistant(s)
MLD	Mild Learning Difficulties
NEET	Not in Education, Training or Employment
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Children's Education, Services and Skills
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SKIP	Supporting Kids, Avoiding Problems
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Chapter 1

<u>Introduction</u>

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the research by first exploring the interests, values and beliefs of the researcher. These will be discussed in relation to the topic which is the focus of this study: the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. Key terminology which will be referred to in this chapter will be introduced before exploring the rationale for the research. This will include a description of the context in which the study was carried out, in addition to the theoretical assumptions underpinning the research. The chapter will conclude by outlining the distinctive contribution this study offers to the research base.

1.2 Researcher's Position and Axiology

The topic of this research is influenced by the professional experiences and values of the researcher. In particular, it reflects core values and beliefs related to respect, beneficence, social justice and advocacy. These are values which the researcher has developed through their work with schools, children and families, and are central to their role as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) (American Psychological Association, 2017; British Psychological Society, 2018).

Prior to training to become an Educational Psychologist (EP), the researcher spent a period of time working with young people aged between 16-19 years old who were not in education, training or employment (NEET). These young people had all experienced exclusion from school to some degree, including other traumatic life events, such as involvement with the criminal justice system. This experience prompted a core belief for the researcher: that no matter what their start in life, all children and young people should have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Later, the researcher worked as a teaching assistant in a pupil referral unit (PRU) and a mainstream secondary school. It became apparent how complex interactions between systems, including home, school and the wider community, influenced the child and their educational journey. Furthermore, it appeared there was often very little acknowledgement of this interaction when it came to understanding pupils' needs, locating the 'problem' within-child.

As a TEP, the researcher has since encountered children and young people who are at risk of, or have experienced, exclusion from school in their work, many of whom have been primary school age. This is part of a concerning reality that in some cases, children as young as four years of age have been permanently excluded from school in their local authority (LA). It is the researcher's belief that, in line with their core values, listening to the perspectives of children, their parents and school staff is crucial in working towards positive change and creating better outcomes for children and young people.

1.3 School Exclusions and the National Context

1.3.1 Defining Exclusion from School

Exclusion from school in the UK can be defined as "a disciplinary sanction that prevents a pupil from attending school either for a fixed period or permanently" (Gazeley, 2010, p. 294). This is a decision which can only be made by the headteacher. A child can receive more than one fixed-term exclusion in a single academic year, however, this cannot exceed forty five days in total (Department for Education, 2017a).

In instances where fixed-term exclusions last more than five school days, the governing board has a duty to arrange suitable, full-time education for a child no later than the sixth day of exclusion (DfE, 2017a). Where a child is permanently excluded, it is the duty of the local authority to arrange full-time education by the sixth day of the exclusion (DfE, 2017).

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015) (DfE, 2015) indicates that "alternative provision includes pupil referral units, alternative provision academies and alternative provision free schools…[and] includes providers of online learning" (DfE, 2015, pp. 216 - 217)

1.3.2 Current Legislation, Policy and Practice

In 2003, the launch of the Every Child Matters agenda highlighted the importance of early intervention and multi-agency working to improve outcomes for children, including their educational outcomes (DfE, 2003). However, the Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019) suggests that more needs to be done to support schools in their ability to understand and respond to children's needs, particularly those with special educational needs (SEN) and those at risk of exclusion (DfE, 2019b).

Government statistics show that school exclusion rates have increased over recent years (DfE, 2017b, 2018, 2019a). The Division of Education and Child Psychology (DECP) has expressed

concerns that recent school policy initiatives support the use of school exclusions and fail to recognise the links between children's behaviour in school and factors including poverty, inequality, wellbeing and mental health (OHare, 2019).

It has been argued that changes to national policy since the Every Child Matters (2003) agenda have disregarded the importance of inclusive school practice (Cole, McCluskey, Daniels, Thompson, & Tawell, 2019). Headteachers have similarly reported that budget cuts to schools are resulting in difficulties supporting children with the most challenging behaviours (Weale & Duncan, 2017).

Publication of increasing school exclusion rates have additionally placed the issue in the public eye over recent years. Parents have expressed disappointment in the current education system (Mair, 2018), whilst last year's 'School to prison line' campaign similarly illustrated young people's concerns regarding permanent exclusion (Smith, 2018). Concerns regarding primary school exclusion rates have also been raised, with reports suggesting the number of primary school children attending PRUs has more than doubled since 2011 (Weale, 2019).

The Office for Standards in Children's Education, Services and Skills (Ofsted) argue that pupil-parent involvement, and relationships between parents and school staff are key factors in reducing primary school exclusion rates (Ofsted, 2009). Consequently, this illustrates a need for research which includes the voices of children, parents and teachers, if we are to better understand the experience of exclusion.

1.3.3 Prevalence and Trends of School Exclusion

Government statistics published in 2019 for the academic year 2017/2018 indicate the rate of permanent exclusions has remained stable at 0.10 per cent (approximately 10 pupils per 10,000). However, the total number of permanent exclusions across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools increased from 7,700 in 2016/17 to 7,900 in 2017/18 (DfE, 2019a).

The rate of fixed-period exclusions increased from 4.76 per cent in 2016/17 to 5.08 per cent in 2017/18, equivalent to approximately 508 pupils per 10,000. Overall, the number of fixed-term exclusions across state-funded primary, secondary and special schools increased from 381,900 in 2016/17 to 410,800 in 2017/18.

Exclusion rates are highest amongst secondary school aged pupils, particularly during Years 9 and 10 (DfE, 2019a). Exclusions in primary schools appear to occur most frequently in Years 5 and 6 (DfE, 2019a).

Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the most common reason for fixed-period and permanent exclusions. Physical assault against an adult is the most common reason for exclusion in special schools (DfE, 2019a).

It is important to acknowledge concerns regarding the validity of school exclusion figures. The number of fixed-term exclusions in particular should be interpreted with caution (Vulliamy & Webb, 2001) due to unofficial practices of informal exclusions or 'off-rolling' (Cole et al., 2019; DfE, 2019b) and internal exclusion practices (Maguire, Macrae, & Milbourne, 2003). Furthermore, Gill (2017) brings attention to the fact that in 2016, the number of children registered at alternative provisions equalled approximately five times more than the official exclusion figures. This suggests that government statistics significantly underestimate the true reality of school exclusion (Gill, 2017).

1.3.4 Local Context

In the context of the LA in which the research took place, the financial cost of permanent exclusion is felt to be placing additional pressures on a very limited budget available to schools to support their most vulnerable children (Spoors, 2018). In this LA, whilst the overall number of primary school exclusions decreased between 2016/17 to 2017/18, representing a decrease in fixed-term exclusions, the number of permanent exclusions from primary school increased from 22 to 23 (DfE, 2019a).

Though a decrease in fixed-term exclusions is positive, this data may suggest schools are taking the decision to permanently exclude more quickly, and not necessarily as a last resort. This represents an area of significant concern for Children's Services, including the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). By focusing on permanent exclusions from primary school, this research is addressing an area which is of both local and national concern.

1.3.5 Children at Risk of School Exclusion

Children and young people who are excluded from school are amongst the most vulnerable in society (Parsons, Godfrey, Howlett, Hayden, & Martin, 2001). Looked after children are two to three times more likely to be excluded from school compared to those who are not in the care system (Hutchinson, 2017), whilst children with SEN and Education, Health and Care

Plans (EHCPs) are more than four times more likely to be excluded from school than those without (DfE, 2019a).

Furthermore, in 2017, one in two children in schools for excluded pupils were recognised as having social, emotional and mental health needs (Gill, 2017). This is particularly concerning given that the number of children and young people in the UK with mental health conditions appear to be increasing (Stanbridge & Mercer, 2019). Exclusion rates are also higher amongst boys and children of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic groups (DfE, 2019a).

Children living in areas of high deprivation and who are eligible for free school meals are particularly vulnerable to school exclusion (DfE, 2019a). Disrupted education, poor school attendance, parental absence, parental stress and unemployment are amongst risk factors associated with school exclusion (Macrae, Maguire, & Milbourne, 2003; Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen, & McCluskey, 2009), illustrating links between deprivation, social exclusion and school exclusion.

Furthermore, a survey by Ofsted (2009) suggested that a school's rate of exclusion was influenced by factors including the philosophy of the school, their capacity to meet challenges and support received from LA and outside agencies (Ofsted, 2009). This illustrates the complexity of school exclusion and how a child's risk of exclusion can be influenced by many factors.

1.4 The Impact of Exclusion from School

The impact of exclusion from school can be significant, leading to social, emotional, academic and economic consequences for children and young people (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019). Exclusion from school raises significant equal opportunity issues (Gersch & Nolan, 1994) and is associated with poor future outcomes including: poor educational outcomes (Hayden, 1997), poor mental health (Watling, 2004), involvement in crime (Valdebenito, Eisner, Farrington, Ttofi, & Sutherland, 2018), homelessness and unemployment (Pirrie et al., 2009). The implications of exclusion from school therefore extend beyond schooling and put a child at increased risk of long-term social exclusion (Coleman, 2015; Gill, 2017; Maguire et al., 2003).

There is some evidence to suggest that children who have been permanently excluded from school face the greatest risk of experiencing negative life outcomes, particularly related to social exclusion (Berridge, Brodie, Pitts, Porteous, & Tarling, 2001; Coles et al., 2002; Pirrie

et al., 2009). This may be related to difficulties breaking out of disrupted educational pathways (Pirrie et al., 2009).

Macrae et al. (2003) argue that exclusion from primary school is especially worrying. It is a crucial time in a child's development and arguably primary-aged children are particularly vulnerable during this stage in their life due to their dependence on adults. (Hayden, 1997; Parsons et al., 2001). In a study by Parsons et al. (2001), thirty six per cent of children excluded in primary school received further exclusions in secondary school. This illustrates the importance of early intervention and the potential, positive impact it could have in reducing the overall numbers of school exclusion (Hayden, 1994).

Given the implications of permanent exclusion and current school exclusion figures, working towards reducing the number of permanent exclusions from primary school is vital for improving educational and future life outcomes for children and young people.

1.5 Understanding the Experience of School Exclusion

Gersch and Nolan (1994) argue that whilst data can provide a valuable insight into the trends and prevalence of exclusion, qualitative research exploring attitudes and experiences of pupils, parents and teachers is likely to offer more meaningful data than statistics alone. Listening to pupil and parent views is similarly encouraged by statutory guidance such as the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) (DfE, 2015; HM Government, 2014).

1.5.1 Pupil Voice

Gordon (2001) argues that young people's voices are frequently absent from policy and research related to school exclusion. "Nobody seems to be asking them, the most important participants in the school exclusion debate" (Gordon, 2001, p. 83). Yet, when asked for their views, children and young people can offer a valuable insight into their experience and illuminate issues about school practice and professional ideologies (Knipe, Reynolds, & Milner, 2007).

It has been noted that much of the research on school exclusion has been based on adolescent experiences (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). Gersch and Nolan (1994) found that pupils expressed feelings including uncertainty, upset and disappointment regarding their exclusion. Experiences including challenges in primary school with regards to schoolwork and

friendships, difficulties with teacher relationships and disrupted family life were also common amongst the pupils interviewed (Gersch & Nolan, 1994).

The importance of peer relationships in providing a sense of belonging and security for pupils who have experienced exclusion, positive relationships and communication between staff, pupils and parents, have also been emphasised by listening to pupil views (Kenny, 2018; Loizidou, 2009; Moore, 2009). Furthermore, whilst exclusion may be a traumatic experience, it has been found to prompt changes in some young people's lives, leading to more positive life trajectories (Coleman, 2015).

1.5.2 Parent Voice

Although there appears to be an increasing interest to include pupils' experience of school exclusion in research (McDonald & Thomas, 2003; Smith, 2009), parents' perspectives remain limited (Smith, 2009). As individuals who are considerably involved in the exclusion process, it is important that their stories can also be heard (McDonald & Thomas, 2003).

Parents have expressed feeling judged as unworthy, having a lack of control over their child's education, and feeling traumatised by the exclusion process (McDonald & Thomas, 2003; Walsh, 2017). However, research has also offered some insight into what parents find supportive, including positive home-school engagement and support from school staff (Lally, 2013).

1.5.3 School, Parent and Pupil Perspectives

Smith (2009) suggests that in complex circumstances, such as school exclusion, there will be a number of potentially different yet equally valid perspectives to be gathered.

Applying a systemic framework to school exclusion, Rendall (2005) explored pupils', parents' and headteachers' experience of permanent exclusion. The parents and pupils felt they had not been listened to. Conversely, the headteachers believed they had listened, but that pupils' accounts were unreliable and considered a means to avoid blame (Rendall, 2005). By interviewing members of the school and family systems, Rendall (2002) suggested it had been possible for participants to gain an insight into some of the issues underlying the pupils' behaviour, which may not have been considered otherwise.

The current research is concerned with gathering the views of primary school pupils, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion. Therefore, it reflects a current demand for research in this area to address the systemic nature of exclusion. Importantly, it

offers the individuals who are most involved in the process of permanent exclusion, including those whose voices are so often unrepresented, to have their stories heard.

1.6 Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning this Research

1.6.1 Ecological Systems Theory

In 1976, Bronfenbrenner presented a seminal publication titled 'The Experimental Ecology of Education' (Anderson, Boyle, & Deppeler, 2014; Bronfenbrenner, 1976). He suggested that whether, and how, individuals learn in educational settings depends on the interactions between systems in two respects. Firstly, the relationships between the characteristics of an individual learner and the characteristics of their environment, such as their home, school, and community. Secondly, the relationships and inter-connections that occur between these environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) later developed ecological systems theory to provide a framework for identifying, organising and understanding the factors within these environments, and the relationships between them (Anderson et al., 2014). Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that "the ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). These are as follows:

- The Micro-system: this inner-most system places the child at the centre and has the most direct impact on their development. It refers to the interpersonal relations the child experiences on a day to day basis in different settings, roles and activities, such as at home, school, in the playground or with peers. Within this system, values and beliefs held by others can impact the child, and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

- The Meso-system: this system refers to the relationships that occur within two or more micro-systems an individual actively participates in. For example, for a child, experiences at home may connect to experiences at school, whilst experiences at school further impact experiences in the community with peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

- The Exo-system: this refers to one or more settings in which a child does not actively participate, but there may be interactions or events which occur within them which still affect the child. For example, changes made to educational policies at the government

level will impact a child's school experience, which in turn could impact their home life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

- The Macro-system: this system relates to the cultural context in which a child lives, including the underlying beliefs and ideologies of that context. This system can therefore influence interactions within the micro, meso and exo-systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) illustrates how a child's developmental trajectories can be influenced by characteristics and processes interacting between different systems, including values, beliefs and discourses (Kelly, 2017). Arguably, it provides a framework from which to discuss school exclusion and illustrates perhaps most explicitly why taking a 'within-child' perspective of conceptualising school exclusion can be unhelpful.

Armstrong et al. (2002) similarly argue that whilst the most common reasons for permanent exclusion may be disruption or aggression of some kind, to simply view permanent exclusion in behavioural terms ignores a complex interaction between social institutions and individuals. This can limit understanding of a child's needs and lead to labels which are used to justify the act of exclusion, rather than addressing the reasons behind it (Armstrong, 1999).

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) acknowledges how interactions between individuals and social systems could impact a child's education, including exclusion from school (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007; Pear & Garner, 1996). Furthermore, it illustrates how language use and labels regarding behaviour, such as those suggested by Armstrong (1999), could inform wider, marginalising discourses, ideologies and beliefs regarding exclusion. By listening to the experiences of pupils, parents and school staff in relation to permanent exclusion from primary school, it is possible to achieve a greater understanding of how each system and the processes within them may impact each other.

1.6.2 Narrative Theory

Prior to the 1960s and 70s, psychological research and theory were characterised by traditional positivist approaches (Bruner, 1986; Butler-Kisber, 2010). These sought to understand the world from an objective point of view and focused on demonstrating causality through empirical data (Kelly, Woolfson, & Boyle, 2017).

However, changes to the socio-political landscape led to an increasing interest in understanding lived experience (Riessman, 2008) and social science began to shift from positivism to interpretivism (Bruner, 1986). During the same period, the function and meaning of language in every day interactions became of greater interest (Butler-Kisber, 2010). This movement towards understanding meaning and interpretation reinforced what is termed as the 'narrative turn'- the paradigm shift towards analysing stories, rather than merely presenting them (Riessman, 2008). The narrative turn was significant in the development of narrative theory and narrative as a method of exploring human experience (Riessman, 2008). As Shweder et al. (2006) argue, narratives are "one of the most powerful interpretive tools that human beings possess for organizing experience in time and for interpreting and valuing human action." (p. 744).

Bruner (1986) suggests there are two modes of knowing: paradigmatic and narrative. Paradigmatic knowing refers to understanding experience through methods of empiricism, which allow phenomena to be categorised or identified as concepts (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 2010). Narrative knowing on the other hand refers to accounts of human action and intentions, whereby experience is located in a particular time and place (Bruner, 1986).

As a way of knowing, narratives are the way in which we organise, give meaning to, and understand our lived experiences (Bruner, 1991). They allow us to communicate our version of reality, thereby influencing our relationship with others and how we choose to live our lives (Bruner, 1991).

By extension, it is argued that narratives play a primary role in the construction, and expression of individual and collective identities (Fina, 2015; Hiles & Cermák, 2008; Riessman, 2008). According to Polkinghorne (1988), self-concept and identity develop through the events we experience, the narratives we tell about those experiences, and the events we might anticipate for the future. From this perspective, identity develops through the images we construct of ourselves and others, and can be different depending on the context we are in (Fina, 2015).

Narratives offer an opportunity to gain a deeper insight into human reality (Hiles & Cermák, 2008). In seeking to gather a greater understanding of primary school exclusion, narrative theory offers a valuable framework with which to explore how children, school staff and

parents give meaning to an event of permanent exclusion they have experienced. Narrative underpins the methodology of this research and will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

1.7 Distinctive Contribution of the Research

This research offers an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school, numbers of which have increased over recent years and are cause for concern both nationally and locally (Department for Education, 2019a; Spoors, 2018). EP practice is concerned with promoting the best outcomes for children and young people through the core values that underpin this research. Understanding the experiences of exclusion is a key step towards changing practice and reducing exclusion rates, whilst this research also offers an opportunity to add to the existing discourse regarding permanent exclusion. Crucially, this research recognises the complex and systemic nature of permanent exclusion, and provides parents, school staff and children with an opportunity to share their stories on an issue which has serious implications for children and young people's future outcomes.

The following chapter will report on findings from a critical review of the literature related to the experience of exclusion from primary school, identifying gaps in the current research base and providing further detail regarding the research aims.

Chapter Two

<u>Literature Review</u>

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will present a critical review of the literature relevant to the research question, specifically articles which elicit the experience of primary school exclusion from the perspectives of pupils, parents/carers and school staff. The research will be critiqued and discussed in relation to five categories: the circumstances and characteristics of children excluded from school, educational trajectories of children excluded from school, childrens' perspectives, parents' perspectives and teacher, LA and multi-agency professionals' perspectives. Conclusions drawn from the critique of previous research will then be discussed and explored with regards to the current research aims.

2.2 Literature Review Search

The literature review aimed to critically evaluate the current research base in relation to the following questions:

1) To what extent has research explored the experiences of exclusion from primary school?
2) What is currently known about the experiences of pupils, parents/carers and school staff regarding permanent exclusion from primary school?

During the literature search, it became apparent that a limited number of studies focused exclusively on the views of those who experienced exclusion from primary school. In order to ensure that relevant findings from the literature were not overlooked, the research identified includes studies which have combined both primary and secondary school experiences of exclusion. Similarly, the type of exclusion, (i.e., permanent) was not specified in the search terms so as to broaden the scope of the literature review.

A systematic search of the literature was carried out between 31.05.2019 and 31.07.2019 using the following online databases: PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Education Research Complete and ERIC. Search terms used included the following: 'school children', 'primary school students', 'primary school', 'elementary school students', 'elementary school', 'exclusion from school', 'student expulsion' and 'school exclusion'.

These terms were combined to make various search strings. Specifically, these included: 'school exclusion' AND 'primary school'; 'school children OR primary school' AND 'exclusion from school' OR 'student expulsion'; 'school expulsion' OR 'school suspension' OR 'school exclusion' AND 'primary school' and 'school exclusion' AND 'primary school students'.

Initially, only research conducted between 2009 – 2019 was included in the search. However, due to the limited number of relevant articles initially identified (N=4) the date range was extended to include research conducted since 1990. Only relevant articles published in peer reviewed journals were selected. Exclusion criteria were applied, for example, studies conducted outside of the UK and research which did not include the experience of exclusion from school. A summary of the literature search strategy and full list of the exclusion criteria can be found in Figure 1.

A number of research studies which met the inclusion criteria provided insufficient information regarding the age of the pupils who had been excluded (Gersch & Nolan, 1994; Gordon, 2001; Munn & Lloyd, 2005). Where contact details were made available in the research article, the author/s were contacted in order to clarify this information (Munn & Lloyd, 2005) Consequently, two articles were excluded from the critical review of the literature (Gersch & Nolan, 1994; Gordon, 2001). A full summary of the articles selected from the review of the literature can be found in Appendix A (page 154).

2.3 Critical Review of Previous Research

The researcher adopted a thematic approach to reviewing the literature. This involved reading and re-reading the articles in order to identify ways in which they could be grouped together, according to key themes or topic areas. This approach was felt to be appropriate given the similarity of the topics discussed in the articles. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to organise and present the findings of the literature review clearly to the reader.

The articles identified in the literature search (N=7) fall in to the following five categories:

1. The Circumstances and Characteristics of Children Excluded from School
2. Educational Trajectories of Children Excluded from School
3. Children's Perspectives
4. Parents' Perspectives
5. School Staff, Local Authority and Multi-agency Professionals' Perspectives

Computerised literature search conducted using following the databases:

Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Education Research Complete, ERIC and PsycINFO

General search terms included: 'school exclusion', 'exclusion from school', 'primary school', 'primary school children', primary school students', 'elementary school students', 'elementary school' and 'student expulsion'.

Inclusion criteria:

English; published 2009-2019; peer reviewed journal; focused on the experiences of children/parents/staff

Potentially appropriate articles identified based on title and abstract (N=4)

Additional articles identified from manual search of reference lists (N=6)

Excluded due to reasons including: older than 2009; based outside of UK; not focused on experiences; irrelevant to the research question (eg, children at risk of exclusion) (N= 7)

Articles appropriate for critical review based on full text (N=3)

Additional articles added from extended date search (1990-2009) (N=11) including relevant articles from reference list of those previously identified (N=1) based on title and abstract.

Additional articles identified through hand searches of relevant research journals (N = 1)

Excluded due to reasons including: not available; secondary age only; not focused on experiences; book; age of pupils excluded not specified by author/s (N=9)

Final articles identified for critical review (N=7)

Figure 1 - **Literature Search Strategy**

Critical appraisal is the process of evaluating research to determine its validity, methodological rigour and relevance (Hannes, 2011). Whilst there is currently no commonly agreed criterion for assessing qualitative research (Kane, Wood, & Barlow, 2007), the use of quality assessment checklists is considered useful in guiding the appraisal process (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016).

The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2018) checklist for qualitative research was used to appraise the selected articles (CASP, 2018). The CASP consists of 10 questions in relation to three areas: the validity of research findings, the research results, and research value. Each question includes prompts to aid the appraisal process. The CASP (2018) provided a useful guide for the current researcher to critique the literature and prompted them to consider questions regarding validity and reliability which they may not have done otherwise.

2.3.1 The Circumstances and Characteristics of Children Excluded from School

Three of the studies reported on findings related to the circumstances and characteristics of children excluded from school through a combination of interviews and information collated from data files (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden, Sheppard, & Ward, 1996; Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen, & McCluskey, 2011). Specifically, this included: reasons given for exclusion, identified special educational need (SEN) and level of in-school support, circumstances of family and home life and involvement from outside agencies.

Hayden et al. (1996) reported interim findings of a three staged, funded research project. 46 LAs - formally known and referred to by the authors as Local Education Authorities - in England and Wales, provided data on primary and secondary school exclusions between 1992-1993. The authors state that some LAs returned uncompleted questionnaires, noting lack of time, staff shortages and lack of relevant data to account for this. The data collected suggested inconsistencies across LAs in the way exclusions were documented, for example, less than half of respondents provided information on reasons for exclusions. This may be reflective of the level of accountability given to LAs at the time in terms of monitoring and reviewing exclusion rates.

The article also presented early findings from 38 case studies involving interviews with primary schools, parents/carers and excluded primary school pupils conducted in two LAs during the academic year 1993/1994 (Hayden et al., 1996). Nine out of every ten children were male, and higher incidences of exclusions were reported for the older children within the primary age range. Ethnicity was not recorded in the first LA, however, 52 per cent of excluded pupils in

the second LA were from black, ethnic minority or mixed-race backgrounds. The authors note that less than 30 per cent of the school population in this LA represented these groups, illustrating how minority groups are amongst those most at risk of permanent exclusion.

The authors reported that 38 per cent (LA1) and 15 per cent (LA2) of primary school children excluded from school had a Statement of SEN (now EHCPs) at the time of their exclusion (Hayden et al., 1996). Emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) was the primary SEN identified for many of the children. Physical aggression against another pupil was the most frequently stated reason for exclusion from primary school in both LAs, whilst descriptions such as 'disobedient' and 'disruptive' were also quoted (Hayden et al., 1996, p. 221). Education department files on both LAs indicated between 80 and 90 percent of families were receiving involvement from outside agencies such as social services.

Whilst the authors acknowledge these are early findings, it is important to consider some significant methodological limitations which question the reliability and robustness of the research. Firstly, the authors do not state how the LAs or participants were selected to take part in the case studies. Secondly, key information regarding data collection, including the number of interviews which took place, the type of interviews and interview questions used have been omitted. Finally, the views of the children were not reported, whilst reports of parental perspectives were minimal.

Despite these limitations, Hayden et al's. (1996) findings illustrate there are number of systemic factors which influence school exclusion, and the authors acknowledge a correlation between primary school exclusion and disadvantage within wider contexts.

Gross and McChrystal (2001) similarly applied a mixed-methods approach in order to explore how Statements of SEN were being used to support children with identified EBD (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). The sample consisted of all pupils with Statements of SEN who were permanently excluded from mainstream schools between 1998 and 1999 in an urban LA (N=26). Ten pupils were of primary age and sixteen of secondary age. In terms of ethnicity and gender, data collected stated 23 pupils were male and the majority (N=19) of the sample were white. The generalisability of this research is therefore limited due to the small sample size.

In the first stage of the study, data was gathered using the LA's SEN and exclusion files. Fifty percent of all pupils were identified as having EBD and a learning difficulty (LD) according to their Statement of SEN. Half of all pupils were permanently excluded due to 'reasons of violence towards peers or adults' (Gross & McChrystal, 2001, p. 355). In three cases, changes

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in circumstances within the child's home was an additional factor recorded under reasons for permanent exclusion. Whilst this data is later triangulated with information gathered from interviews, the figures provided regarding the reasons for permanent exclusion equate to more than the sample size (N=26). This may be due to several reasons being documented for a single incident of exclusion; however, this is not clarified by the authors and brings into question the reliability and validity of the data.

Despite the complexity of their identified SEN, only two pupils were described to have additional weekly support outside of the classroom to address their emotional and behavioural needs (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). For many of the pupils, funding provided through their Statement of SEN was used to provide in-class support from a learning support assistant (LSA).

This illustrates a discrepancy between the complex needs of the children who were permanently excluded and the level of support they received to address these needs. As the authors argue, this may suggest behaviour management is perceived to be of greater importance than addressing emotional needs (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). Furthermore, these findings could indicate a preference for behaviourist approaches which place the issue of SEN within-child, and place responsibility on the pupil to change their behaviour (OHare, 2019).

Finally, whilst pupils were later asked about their views on the events surrounding their permanent exclusion, there appears to be a missed opportunity in terms of understanding, from the pupils' perspective, what type of support they received and whether they found this helpful.

In another study, Pirrie et al. (2011) investigated the educational trajectories of pupils permanently excluded from special schools and PRUs in England. Eight of the 24 young people who took part in the study were under the age of twelve at the time of their exclusion in 2005-2006, most participants being between 12-14 years of age. Nineteen had been permanently excluded from special schools and five from PRUs. Similarly to the findings of Gross and McChrystal (2001) and Hayden et al. (1996), the data indicated many of the young people had complex and challenging backgrounds, in addition to a combination of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD) (Pirrie et al., 2011).

The authors describe some of the challenges of real-world research (Pirrie et al., 2011). In some cases, there appeared to be a lack of communication between agencies which made gaining written consent from the young people challenging. The authors argue that these difficulties did not significantly impact the outcome of the research. However, it does suggest that some of the most disadvantaged young people may not have been represented in the final sample.

Furthermore, the authors indicate that 56 young people initially met the inclusion criteria to take part in the study, identified from a pool of 634 special schools and 193 PRUs. This firstly illustrates the limited generalisability of the sample. Secondly, the inclusion criteria for the sample were not reported in the article, so it is unclear to what extent the sampling method was reliable and affects the replicability of the study.

2.3.2 Educational Trajectories of Children Excluded from School

Pirrie et al. (2011) reported on the destinations of pupils, pre and post permanent exclusion. Interviews were carried out with professionals, which were supplemented with information gathered from a number of service providers via telephone and email. The findings indicated that a disrupted education was common amongst the sample. More than half (N=13) had received at least one additional permanent exclusion and/or had a managed move prior to their permanent exclusion in 2005-2006. The authors indicated this was a pattern which persisted for many of the pupils after this time period.

Pirrie et al. (2011) do not distinguish between primary and secondary aged pupils in their findings. However, a summary table of the pupils' educational histories showed that sixteen of the young people attended mainstream primary schools. Furthermore, details on one pupil who had been excluded from a primary school indicated they had received two permanent exclusions prior to 2005-2006 and attended three subsequent placements following their permanent exclusion. This illustrates the potential long-term impact of permanent exclusion from primary school and the importance of positive early school experiences.

Whilst the authors do not apply a psychological framework to their findings, one parent's perspective illustrates the potential impact of permanent exclusion, "…now that he's got permanently excluded from a National Autistic Society school on his record, nobody wants to touch him" (Pirrie et al., 2011, p. 526). Arguably, this quote depicts the act of school exclusion to be one of rejection and highlights the potential impact repeated exclusions can have on a child's identity.

In terms of post-exclusion experiences, parents expressed a lack of agency in the decision-making process of finding a placement (Pirrie et al., 2011). The authors argue that whilst legislation advocates for service providers to start with the needs of the child when identifying suitable provision, their findings indicated that identifying provision which met all the needs of the young person was challenging.

The findings also included successful placement experiences post exclusion (Pirrie et al., 2011). Reports from pupils and parents indicated the quality of relationships with service providers was important, particularly that professionals understood the needs of the family well and had been consistent in their lives. This suggests that feeling valued and understood by professionals supports children and their families to build their capacity for positive change following exclusion.

The authors describe that the original research design included interviews with "the young people, parents/carers and four or five service providers" (Pirrie et al., 2011, p. 522); however, the final number of interviews carried out is not made explicit. The authors state that the evidence provided draws on interviews with service providers, yet pupil and parental views are also included in the findings. Some methodological issues surrounding data collection are therefore unclear to the reader, including, who the interviewees were, where parental views were obtained from, the interview schedule, and the method of data analysis used. Furthermore, pupil views were far less prominent throughout the findings compared to those of parents and professionals.

2.3.3 Children's Perspectives

Whilst the majority of studies identified in the literature review reported having conducted interviews with children as part of their research (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Hayden & Ward, 1996; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker, Paget, Ford, & Gwernan-Jones, 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011) few included their views in the findings and those which did lacked significant detail from the child's perspective.

Hayden and Ward (1996) reported on findings from interviews with 22 primary-aged children who had been excluded from school during the academic year of 1993-1994. Pupils interviewed were aged 7-12 years old. The study drew from the sub sample of case studies in Hayden and colleagues' (1996) research (Hayden & Ward, 1996).

Firstly, the authors draw attention to the importance of considering the ethical and methodological considerations when carrying out research with children, including issues of power imbalance, the potential for children to experience distress during an interview and the process of obtaining consent. The authors demonstrate a child-centred epistemology, emphasising the value of gathering the views of the child.

Whilst they address the role of the researcher in terms of aiding the child to communicate their views, the authors do not refer to the issue of reflexivity, particularly their role in developing a shared meaning with the child. Developing rapport and knowing the child prior to interview is stressed as playing a role in correctly interpreting the child's views. However, the authors do not present evidence to suggest that such efforts were made prior to conducting their own interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with pupils using a booklet created by the researchers to aid the interview process. Efforts were made to ensure that the material included in the booklets was relatable to the child and allowed the child to express their views in several ways. This is a strength of the study and illustrates how qualitative research with children can be adapted to suit their needs.

The children were also presented with a series of pictures depicting classroom scenes and asked to describe them. Whilst the authors explain this was helpful in eliciting further views about school, they again do not consider issues of reflexivity, for example, potential bias related to the pictures chosen by the researcher and the influence this may have had on the children's responses.

Findings from the interviews were reported in relation to four themes: "getting excluded, time out of school, going back to school, and school rules, rewards and sanctions" (Hayden & Ward, 1996, p. 259). The children were able to describe the physical altercations that occurred prior to their exclusion, suggesting they felt some sense of responsibility in terms of what had led to their exclusion.

The findings emphasised that exclusion from school was overall a negative experience for the children in the sample. Maintaining relationships with peers was considered particularly important and a significant factor which contributed towards feelings about going back to school (Hayden & Ward, 1996).

The majority of children felt their exclusion had been unjust, that they had been blamed or unfairly treated. Some also showed an awareness of their SEN and believed that their needs had not been addressed. Two older children in the sample appeared to show an awareness of the wider context where "evidence against them was building up" (Hayden & Ward, 1996, p. 260).

Theories of child development emphasise the developmental, social and emotional benefits of peer interaction, some of which are implicated in Hayden and Ward's (1996) findings. The pupils' views on relationships particularly align with psychological theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), which emphasises the role of relationships and belongingness in meeting our psychological needs, in addition to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The children's belief that their exclusion was unjust emphasises how the act of exclusion may further threaten a child's sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Finally, Hayden and Ward's (1996) findings suggest that being excluded did not have a significance influence on the young peoples' subsequent behaviour in school. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the complex needs of children who experience exclusion from school. Arguably, this brings into question the purpose of exclusion and whom it benefits.

In another study, Munn and Lloyd (2005) placed the issue of school exclusion within the context of social exclusion, specifically within three common themes: Relativity, Agency, and Dynamics. They draw attention to the importance of considering the wider socio-economic context of school exclusion, and the challenges this can present to schools when they are tasked with meeting the targets of government policy.

The authors reported on findings from interviews with children and young people collated from three projects. Three of the eleven children interviewed in the first project were primary school age, however, young people in projects two (N=30) and three (N=25) had experienced exclusion from secondary school only. Semi-structured interviews focused on their experiences of exclusion, including reasons for and consequences of their exclusion, views of schooling and the involvement of parents/carers in the exclusion process (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). Some of the findings additionally referred to data collected from interviews with teachers and parents in the first and second projects.

Themes were identified following content analysis of data gathered from all projects. Throughout the article, quotes are included to illustrate pupil views which note the project the pupil took part rather than their age. This makes it difficult to ascertain which perspectives relate to those who have experienced exclusion from primary school.

Within the themes discussed in the findings, the importance of relationships with others, feeling respected and listened to (particularly by teachers) is prominent. Whilst pupils often took responsibility for their actions, these were also felt to have been provoked by teachers' actions or attitudes (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). Positive relationships with staff members were a feature

of specialist provision that pupils valued (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). This suggests a discrepancy between the quality of relationships with teachers for those who attended mainstream school, compared to those who attended smaller, specialist provisions.

As argued by the authors, the findings illustrate the important role of school ethos in supporting pupils' sense of belonging and their involvement in school practices (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). They conclude by suggesting that targets to raise levels of attainment do not account for the wider context. Schools also have a role to play in supporting pupils' sense of self-efficacy, self-worth, and sense of belonging if school exclusions and therefore, social exclusion, is to decrease (Munn & Lloyd, 2005).

In terms of limitations, the study took place within the context of Scottish social and educational policies, restricting the generalisability of its findings. It is also important to consider that the authors do not explain their recruitment process in detail, whilst participation in project three was incentivised through the use of music tokens (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). The reliability of participants' responses should therefore be considered, whilst the replicability and rigour of the study should be questioned due to the lack of information provided regarding the recruitment process.

2.3.4 Parents' Perspectives

The literature review identified one study which focused exclusively on parents' experiences of exclusion from school (Parker et al., 2016). The study was part of a larger research project; Supporting Kids, Avoiding Problems (SKIP) which explored the relationship between school exclusion and children's psychopathology (Parker et al., 2016).

Semi-structured interviews were used to capture the experiences of 35 parents of 37 children aged 5-12 years; 35 having had experience of either fixed and/or permanent exclusions, two being at risk of exclusion. Some children in the sample were in Year 7 of secondary school at the time of their exclusion. 27 interviews were conducted with mothers and 5 with both parents.

At this point, it is important to consider the ethical issues regarding this study. Whilst the authors give some attention to the process of gaining consent from parents, the same cannot be said for the children's permission to participate in the study. This therefore raises ethical concerns regarding the way in which information was collected about the children and whether they had given permission for their data to be used as part of the larger research project.

Thematic analysis of the findings resulted in three themes "the complex journey of exclusion, a continuum of coping and wider impacts" (Parker et al., 2016, p. 136). The authors illustrated this through a visual model, which highlights the complex nature of exclusion. Parents described how exclusion often came at a time of crisis for their child, yet, as quotes provided by the authors suggest, exclusion seemed to become part of a recurring cycle for many children; "…he does have periods of good behaviour…but I mean he's been excluded, I mean this year already, and he's been excluded, February he was excluded, March he was excluded…." (Parker et al., 2016, p. 137). This included incidences of informal exclusions for example, exclusion from certain subjects or the classroom environment (Parker et al., 2016).

Attitudes towards exclusion varied, some parents seeing it as an opportunity to access resources and services that their child needed. Other parents described feeling ostracised, stigmatised and judged due to their child's exclusion, in addition to guilt or failure (Parker et al., 2016). This illustrates how exclusion from school has the potential to impact a parent's sense of identity and belonging as much as their child's.

The findings also described how parents' perceived ability to advocate for their child often related to their sense of empowerment and confidence to act on their knowledge of 'the system' (Parker et al., 2016). Communication between home and school was important for parents in terms of building relationships and their child being able to access the support they required. The quality and frequency of communication was also associated with the extent to which parents felt their views were valued by school (Parker et al., 2016).

Of note is the fact that this study was published after the implementation of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), yet these findings are not discussed in relation to it despite the emphasis placed on parental choice and participation in decision making. This would appear to be a missed opportunity considering the significance and relevance of the code to Parker et al.'s (2016) findings.

Finally, parents described the impact of exclusion in terms of financial, practical and psychological implications for them and their family. Parents reported how their children had missed opportunities in terms of academia and social aspects of school which negatively impacted their mental health and emotional wellbeing (Parker et al., 2016).

The authors conclude by discussing their findings within a systemic theoretical framework, emphasising the relationship between systems around a child and their ability to cope (Parker et al., 2016). Arguably, the same model appears to be relevant to the parent's ability to cope

with the experience of their child's exclusion. Whilst the authors suggest ways forward in terms of supporting children at risk of exclusion, it may have been relevant for them to consider how parents could be supported in greater detail, bearing in mind the focus of their study.

Gross and McChrystal (2001) also reported on parental experiences of exclusion in the second phase of their study. This involved the selection of six case studies where semi-structured interviews were conducted with school staff (N=7), parents/carers (N=3) and pupils (N=2). Their findings suggested parents had experienced good communication with school regarding the exclusion process. However, all parents felt that the schools were unable to meet their child's emotional needs. From the parents' accounts, this appeared to be linked to the transition from primary to secondary school, specifically the increasing demands from the curriculum and teachers' capacity to meet the needs of individual pupils (Gross and McChrystal, 2001).

Arguably, these findings correlate somewhat with current government statistics which show that exclusion rates are highest for secondary school age children, including times of transition such as Year 7. However, it is important to note that the three parents interviewed were the same families with whom the excluding schools had reported they had a positive relationship (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). It is therefore important to consider how this may have affected parents' responses (Gross & McChrystal, 2001), as well as the extent to which the sample represents the views of parents whose children are excluded from school more generally.

2.3.5 School Staff, Local Authority and Multi-agency Perspectives

The article by Macleod, Pirrie, McCluskey, & Cullen, 2013 was the only study identified in the literature review where the views of professionals were central to the aims of the research. The findings reported on interviews conducted with parents and service providers as part of the longitudinal study reported in Pirrie et al. (2011). The sample consisted of thirteen parents whose children had experienced permanent exclusion from school between the ages of nine and fourteen. Interviews were also conducted with 72 service providers. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit views relating to events before and after the permanent exclusion, in addition to the appropriateness of the young person's current placement (Macleod et al., 2013). Macleod et al. (2013) used the data from these interviews in order to explore the parental identities evident in the discourse used by service providers.

In terms of ethical implications of this research, the authors state that they do not "claim to uncover how service providers would discuss the role of parents had they been explicitly asked to reflect on the topic" (Macleod et al., 2013, p. 388), yet, they do not give consideration to the

extent to which their participants were aware of how their data would be used. This research therefore raises ethical issues regarding deception and informed consent.

The ways in which service providers talked about the parents were reported in relation to three themes: "poor parenting", "poor parents" and "pests" (Macleod et al., 2013, p. 398). Service providers most often blamed circumstances of the child's home life for their behaviour, for example, parents being unable to manage their child's behaviour. Alternatively, parents were considered to act in the best interests of their children, but lack the personal, social or economic resources to meet their needs. The authors suggested that the discourse used by service providers reflected the extent to which their idea of what was best for the child overlapped with the parents' views – the more their views overlapped, the more likely service providers would perceive the parent as a "poor soul" (Macleod et al., 2013, p. 400). Finally, the authors suggest a correlation between parents' level of employment and their perceived 'pushiness'.

The authors highlight the importance of service providers getting to know families if the limited parental identities reflected in their findings are to change. They suggest that service providers have a role to play in shaping the way parents are positioned. Notably, the authors also recognise that parents and service providers exist in a system where resources and workloads are stretched, suggesting that wider issues and discourses in society must also be addressed (Macleod et al., 2013).

The authors describe their research in the context of social policy and the extent to which legislation has positioned the role of the parent over time (Macleod et al., 2013). Whilst the authors do not refer to a specific psychological framework when discussing their findings, the context in which it is set emphasises the role of language and the wider implications of social policy, consistent with a social constructionist epistemology. Importantly, it brings to light the social and political marginalisation of parents whose children have been excluded due to behaviours related to social, emotional and mental health needs.

However, in addition to the ethical issues previously discussed, a further limitation of this study relates to a lack of detail regarding the method of data analysis. This brings into question the extent to which the data was interpreted subjectively, impacting the reliability of the analysis.

Several other studies identified in the literature review involved interviews with school staff and other multi-agency professionals (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996).

Gross and McChrystal (2001) reported findings from schools' perspectives in relation to within-school factors and multi-agency support within the LA. Their findings indicated a lack of clarity from the schools' perspectives as to which agencies they could contact for support before the decision was made to permanently exclude a child. Furthermore, schools felt that agencies themselves lack an understanding of each other's roles.

Quantitative data provided by the authors in the first phase of the study indicated that primary schools were more likely to have received outside agency support compared to secondary schools, however they do not explore this difference further in the second phase of the research (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). Comparing primary and secondary school experiences may have helped to provide further information on the potential barriers and opportunities to accessing this type of support for children who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

The findings also highlighted that staff value face to face contact with parents in school and that this is important for building positive relationships with families (Gross & McChrystal, 2001). Many of the staff interviewed demonstrated child-centred approaches, several had a good understanding of home circumstances of the child and made efforts to involve the family, however, a small number struggled with the concept of inclusion (Gross & McChrystal, 2001).

A limitation of this study is that, whilst insightful, little attempt is made to draw together information from the case studies. For example, the authors described a range of staff attitudes were apparent with regards to inclusion, yet these differences are not discussed in relation to other themes which seem relevant, such as home-school relationship. It is also unclear to what extent the experiences or attitudes described are those of primary or secondary school staff. The inclusion of quotes and an indication of the type of school the child attended using a key (for example, primary school 1,2, etc) may have helped to provide the reader with some clarity as to how the findings relate to one another. Furthermore, the authors do not indicate the method used to analyse the data, questioning the reliability of the findings.

Finally, Hayden et al. (1996) reported interim findings on staff experiences of primary school exclusion in two LAs. These suggested that support systems run by the LA were instrumental in schools maintaining lower numbers of permanent exclusions (Hayden et al., 1996). Having a strong philosophy of inclusion within the LA was also felt to contribute to this. However, schools reported that this could put them under pressure not to exclude, potentially resulting in some children being kept in school under difficult circumstances, exacerbating the situation

(Hayden et al., 1996). The authors do not state how many interviews were conducted in each LA; therefore, these findings should be interpreted with this in mind.

Support from individuals, such as key workers, were reported to make a difference for some children (Hayden & Ward, 1996). As emphasised by theories of attachment, these findings illustrate the importance of a positive and consistent relationship with an adult.

2.4 Synthesis of Findings from Previous Research

This literature review sought to understand the extent to which research has explored the experiences of exclusion from primary school. It also sought to discover what is currently known about the perspectives of pupils, parents/carers and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school.

A number of studies have been conducted to understand the experience of exclusion from primary school (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Hayden & Ward, 1996; Macleod et al., 2013; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011), some of which have focused primarily on the perspectives of children, parents/carers, school staff or professionals (Hayden & Ward, 1996; Macleod et al., 2013; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016). However, there are several methodological and interpretive limitations to these which bring to question issues of reliability, validity and generalisability.

The lack of articles published within the last ten years signifies an absence of current research related to primary school exclusions. Notably, the majority of the studies discussed were conducted prior to the most recent SEND Code of Practice (2015) and therefore do not reflect the most recent legislative developments in relation to educational policy and practice (DfE, 2015) (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Hayden & Ward, 1996; Macleod et al., 2013; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Pirrie et al., 2011).

Most of the literature combined data from both primary and secondary schools (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Macleod et al., 2013; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011), indicating a gap in the research for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences of primary school exclusion. Furthermore, whilst some researchers acknowledged they had experienced challenges in contacting parents and young people (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Pirrie et al., 2011), it is notable that pupil and parent voices were less prominent in some of the research findings compared to the views of the school(Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Pirrie et al., 2011).

Similar themes emerged from the research findings in relation to parent, pupil and staff/professional perspectives. The importance of relationships for the child, parent and school was prominent, including the frequency and quality of communication between them (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden & Ward, 1996, p. 199; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011). The presence of a consistent adult who knew the child and their family well was also noted in several of the findings as being valuable for the children who had been excluded (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011).

Exclusion from school was rarely considered to be a one-off event, findings indicating the majority of children had experienced challenging home lives and previous exclusions (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011). Pupils particularly valued when teachers had an understanding of their background and current home life (for example, Munn & Lloyd, 2005). The involvement of multi-agency professionals was also common for many of the young people, indicating the wider needs within their family, whilst the impact of exclusion was also acknowledged in terms of economic and practical implications (such as, Parker et al., 2016).

Finally, the emotional impact for pupils and their parents was often discussed. Feeling powerless and having a lack of choice were noted amongst parents, particularly in terms of identifying a suitable placement for their child after the exclusion (for example Gross & McChrystal, 2001). The decision to exclude was considered unjust amongst many pupils, whilst some parents felt their child's account of the situation was not considered (such as (Hayden & Ward, 1996 and Parker et al., 2016). The stigma associated with being excluded was felt by both pupils and parents in several studies, noting the impact this had on relationships with others, such as peers and other parents, (for example Munn & Lloyd, 2005 and Parker et al., 2016).

2.5 Gap in the Literature and Current Research Aims

The literature review suggests that previous research on the experience of school exclusion has primarily focused on secondary school exclusion. Whilst some has been conducted on permanent exclusion from primary school, the research base is limited and, in many cases outdated with regards to current and relevant legislation, such as the Children and Families Act (2014) (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Hayden & Ward, 1996; Macleod et al., 2013; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Pirrie et al., 2011). It appears that further, contemporary

research exploring the experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school is required, which the current research aims to provide.

Additionally, there appears to be some disparity in terms of the degree to which the views of children, parents/carers and school staff have been reported in previous research with regards to their experiences of primary school exclusion. Where all three perspectives have been explored in a study, pupil and parent voices have in some cases appeared less prominent in the findings (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Pirrie et al., 2011). This indicates a gap in the literature for a more in-depth exploration of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school.

Finally, the literature review suggests that previous research has explored the experiences of school exclusion according to specific questions, informed by the research aims, for example, in order to understand the involvement of parents in the process of exclusion, or the consequences of exclusion from the child's perspective, as was the case in Munn & Lloyd's (2005) study. Arguably, this results in an assumption that such questions or areas of interest are also relevant or significant to the participants' experience of exclusion.

Consequently, in contrast with previous literature, the current research seeks to listen to the stories of those who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school as they wish to tell it. It aims to provide a unique contribution to the research base by offering detailed stories of those who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school through a narrative inquiry approach.

In the following chapter, the research methodology, including the design, data collection and methods of analysis will be discussed in relation to the research question and aims of the current study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Following the introduction of the research aims in the previous chapter, this chapter will explore the purpose of the current study in greater detail. It will introduce the philosophical position and assumptions underpinning the research, before providing a rationale for the chosen research design, including a description of the methods used for data collection. The pilot study will be discussed including ways in which this informed the final research project. Finally, details of research procedures including the method of data analysis and ethical considerations will be discussed.

3.2. Epistemological and Ontological Position of the Current Research

The current research is concerned with seeking to understand the reality of an experience of permanent exclusion through the narratives of primary school children, their parents and school staff. It assumes the reality of this experience is subjective and therefore adopts a relativist ontology. Relativism assumes reality is determined by where and how we acquire knowledge about reality; it is constructed by our experiences and social interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This is opposed to realism, which reflects the view that a single, measurable reality exists, and that this can be observed through research, irrespective of human bias or interpretation.

Furthermore, the current research acknowledges permanent school exclusion exists through the persistence of socially constructed norms, whilst individual narratives of permanent exclusion are a product of meaning attributed to experiences within a particular social, cultural and ideological context. As such, the current research also adopts a social constructionist epistemology. Constructionism aligns with a relativist ontology and suggests that what we know is constructed through the various discourses and systems in which we reside. *Knowledges*, as opposed to *knowledge*, are therefore a product of how we come to understand them within social, cultural, historical and ideological contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Social constructionism stems from constructionism, placing greater emphasis on the role of social interactions and how language is used to construct reality (Andrews, 2012).

Social constructionists believe that language represents more than a means to connect with others; it determines the way we make sense of our experiences, how we construct ourselves and those around us (Burr, 2003; Galbin, 2014). Language cannot be separated from context, as it is through social interaction and the context in which language is used that meaning is constructed. Consequently, conceptions and beliefs about reality are formed over time between groups and individuals (Galbin, 2014).

Foucault argues that when used by those in positions of power, language has the capacity to determine what is considered 'different' from the general population and in so doing exclude certain individuals or groups in society (as cited in White, 2007). Labels can consequently be taken as truths which inform discourse, and shape thoughts and beliefs about what constitutes the norm (Madigan, 1992).

Considering Foucault's beliefs in relation to the topic of the current research, one could argue the existence of permanent school exclusion is a result of socially constructed beliefs related to issues including behaviour and inclusion. For instance, the term 'disruptive behaviour', the reason most commonly given for exclusions (DfE, 2019a) arguably reflects socially constructed beliefs about what constitutes as 'disruptive' versus 'acceptable' classroom behaviour. The way in which these behaviours are responded to through school practices consequently communicate what is 'right', or is considered 'good school behaviour' (Billington, 2000; Laws & Davies, 2000).

The language used to describe undesirable behaviours not only has the power to impact beliefs about what is underlying them, but also what can be done about them and whose responsibility it is to do deal with them (Jones, 2003). Furthermore, as illustrated by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), the actions, values and beliefs of individuals within the micro-system can impact the child, and vice versa. It is therefore possible to suggest the way in which individuals make sense of their experience of permanent exclusion from primary school is influenced by socially constructed beliefs and discourses.

From a social constructionist perspective, language, social interactions and context are fundamental to the way in which we make meaning of life experiences. The process of constructing meaning therefore requires these elements to be organised and interpreted by making links with previous experiences, expectations and perceptions (Polkinghorne, 1988). One way in which we interpret experience is through narrative. (Bruner, 1986, 1991).

As described in Chapter 1, narratives allow us to communicate our version of reality by linking together perceptions, events and experiences (Kramp, 2004). Narrative is fundamental to the process of constructing meaning from our experiences and encompasses the complex relationship between language and context (Hiles & Cermák, 2008), which is evident in social constructionist thinking. As such, it offers a relevant and valuable framework for exploring the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. The following section will explore the concept of narrative in further detail.

3.2.1 What is Narrative?

Defining narrative is a challenging task as there is no definitive definition and its use can be dependent on the discipline within which it is being applied (Riessman, 2008). For example, from a social linguistic perspective, narrative may refer to a discrete unit of discourse, whilst in anthropology, narrative could refer to a whole life story (Riessman, 2008). However, amongst these various approaches, commonalities appear which highlight key features that are central to understanding the concept of narrative.

Firstly, narrative can be conceptualised as both a product and a process (Creswell, 2007; Kramp, 2004). Narratives can be the product, that is, the told narrative (Kramp, 2004), which could take form in various ways, such as interviews, observations or written accounts (Reissman, 2008). Narrative also refers to the process of telling; the "practice of storytelling [as a] universal way of knowing and communicating…" (Riessman, 2008, p. 6). The notion that narrative is a practice of storytelling aligns with the assumptions of narrative theory and Bruner's (1991) idea that narratives are the way in which we organise, give meaning to and understand our lived experiences.

The idea of 'stories', or storytelling, is considered a common thread within the concept of narrative (Lewis, 2017). Riessman (2008) offers several perspectives with regards to the social history of the term's 'narrative' and 'story'. However across disciplines, the notion of a 'story' remains a consistent feature in the way narrative is defined (Riessman, 2008)

Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that in qualitative research, 'narrative' refers to a particular type of discourse, that is, a story where "events and actions are drawn together into an organised whole by means of a plot" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). Kramp (2004) argues that by using both terms, it is possible to capture the experiential quality of storytelling. Amongst others, Kramp (2004) and Riessman (2008) adopt the terms 'story' and 'narrative' interchangeably in their

writings (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013; Kramp, 2004; Lewis, 2017; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008).

Arguably, whether the term 'story' or 'narrative' is used, events in themselves are not stories; it is the linking of events through experience that becomes a story (Hiles & Cermák, 2008; Riessman, 2008). Narratives are therefore most commonly understood as accounts of events or a series of events, connected through a chronology or plot (Czarniawska, 2004).

The idea that narratives provide structure to experience by connecting events through time is widely recognised (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kramp, 2004). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note the significance of temporality in narrative, suggesting the meaning we give to experiences changes over time and according to a given context. Their research has been influenced by the work of Dewey (1963), who argued that continuity is key to the meaning of experience.

Dewey (1963) argues that "an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment…" (p. 43), whether that be the people in it or the event taking place at the time (Dewey, 1963). Consequently, he argues the principles of continuity and interaction cannot be separated, since one interaction will influence the next (Dewey, 1963).

Arguably then, narratives represent one version of reality constructed through interactions and relationships with others (Kramp, 2004) and are told, lived and experienced within wider cultural and social contexts (Caine et al., 2013). Narratives can serve different purposes for groups and individuals, for example to remember, justify, persuade or foster a sense of belonging (Riessman, 2008). Whilst different, these functions illustrate an underlying social and interactional role of narratives (Riessman 2008).

The definition of narrative may be complex, yet it is underpinned by key concepts which allow us to understand and explore human experience. For the purposes of this research, the term 'narrative' will be used interchangeably with 'story' or 'stories' throughout the remainder of this thesis. The following sections will explain the research purpose, question and design, before describing the chosen methodology for this research, narrative inquiry.

3.2.2 Research Purpose

According to Creswell (2007) there are four categories of research purpose: explanatory, emancipatory, exploratory and evaluative. The purpose of the current research is exploratory,

as it seeks to better understand a scarcely researched phenomenon (Robson & McCartan, 2017) through the exploration of narratives.

Narratives organise human activity, providing a vehicle for researchers to understand a particular reality of human experience (Hiles & Cermák, 2008). Through narratives, the current researcher sought to understand how pupils, their parents and school staff construct their version of reality according to an experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. The research aim was therefore to gather an in-depth understanding of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school, from the perspective of pupils, parents and school staff.

Robson and McCartan (2017) suggest that in real world research, the purpose to explore can often be accompanied by a concern to facilitate action or bring about change. Lewis (2017) argues that "narrative inquiry often concerns itself with notions of social change; the work is possessed with the potential to raise awareness and questions around practices…" (p. 6). By listening to and sharing participants' narratives, the current researcher hoped to raise an awareness of what it can be like to experience permanent exclusion from primary school from different perspectives. In doing so, this could help to inform thinking about future change regarding primary school exclusion.

Research seeking to facilitate social change and raise awareness can also be considered transformative (Mertens, 2017). Transformative research is based on the axiological assumption that ethical research should promote social justice and human rights (Mertens, 2017) by facilitating the inclusion of individuals from different groups (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008). According to (Mertens, 2017) "the researcher has a responsibility to design strategies that allow those with traditional power and those who have been excluded from power to be engaged in respectful ways" (p. 22). This aligns with the researcher's own axiological beliefs as discussed in Chapter 1, particularly regarding respecting the rights and views of others, and promoting social justice. By seeking to inform future change regarding primary school exclusion, the current research therefore has a secondary, transformative purpose.

3.3 Research Question

A number of factors were influential in the formulation of the research question. Firstly, the literature review identified a gap in the current research base for a richer, more detailed exploration of what it is like to experience permanent exclusion from primary school from the perspectives of children, their parents and school staff. Secondly, previous research has

predominately been informed by specific research questions and consequently more topic-led interview questions (Hiles & Cermák, 2008).

Therefore, the researcher wished to provide participants with the opportunity to share their narratives of permanent exclusion as they chose to tell them. The researcher acknowledged that their research question would be influenced by factors such as their own conceptions of school exclusion, as well as areas previously explored in the literature. However, specific sub-questions may have directed participants' narratives to explore particular lines of enquiry, which the researcher felt would not align with the exploratory purpose of the research. Consequently, a single exploratory question was formulated which reflected the ontological positioning of the research.

It is important to note, that, as with any qualitative inquiry where the purpose is to explore the perceptions of others, the stories participants choose to tell are influenced by the context in which they are told, including to whom they are telling it to (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Whilst the researcher sought to explore participants' narratives without being influenced by predefined sub-questions, they equally acknowledged the role context would play in the construction of participants' narratives.

The current research aimed to answer the central question:

'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?'

3.4 Research Design

The current research employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is concerned with exploring social or psychological phenomena and understanding meaning attributed to the experiences, world view and perspectives of others (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In comparison to quantitative designs which seek causal explanation and generalisation from research findings, qualitative approaches offer the opportunity to understand, and gather a rich account of a phenomenon (Smith, 2015). It is most often considered to align with constructionist or social constructionist epistemologies due to the acknowledgement of context and language in the interpretation of data (Robson & McCartan, 2017).

A qualitative design was therefore felt to be most appropriate for the current study given the exploratory nature of the research question. The following sections will provide further details regarding the chosen methodology of the current research.

3.4.1 Qualitative Methodology

Methodology can be understood as the framework within which research is conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Several qualitative methodologies were considered during the process of designing the current research. These included phenomenology, case study and narrative inquiry. Phenomenology was considered since it is concerned with interpreting the lived experience of a human phenomenon. A phenomenological approach would have required the researcher to identify commonalities or themes amongst participants, detailing 'what' has been experienced and 'how' (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A case study approach would have provided a detailed description of participants' experiences. This would have involved exploring a 'case' (a specific phenomenon) in context, and require data to be gathered from multiple sources, such as observations, interviews and documentation (Robson & McCartan, 2017).

Whilst both these approaches would have been appropriate for exploring the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school, it was felt that neither offered the opportunity to explore participants' *stories* in detail. Given the aim and philosophical assumptions underlying the current research, it was felt than an alternative approach which considered participants' accounts in their entirety (including the context in which they are told) and respected the individuality of their narratives, would be better suited to answering the research question: 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?'

The concept of narrative is central to the research question; therefore, an appropriate methodological approach would arguably reflect the same principles and theoretical assumptions. Narrative inquiry is a methodology which considers narrative as both a method and a phenomenon of study (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). It is concerned with understanding experience as it is expressed through lived and told stories (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) therefore allowing a researcher to immerse themselves in a particular world view and gain a deeper understanding of it (Lewis, 2017). Using a narrative inquiry approach, it is possible to consider participants' stories as a whole, including the interpretations, emotions and thoughts which emerge from them (Lewis, 2017). Narrative inquiry was consequently felt to be most suited to answering the research question and will now be discussed in further detail in the following section.

3.5 Narrative Inquiry

3.5.1 Analysis of Narratives or Narrative Analysis?

Narrative inquiry uses stories to describe human experience and action (Polkinghorne, 1995). Whilst the approaches to conducting narrative inquiry may vary, researchers who engage in it are interested in how individuals communicate meaning from their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kramp, 2004; Riessman, 2008) through the stories they tell (Lewis, 2017).

Central to narrative inquiry are the concepts of narrative knowing and paradigmatic knowing put forward by Bruner (1986) (Kramp, 2004) which were introduced in Chapter 1. Polkinghorne (1995) distinguishes between two different approaches to narrative inquiry which correspond with these notions of knowing: analysis of narratives and narrative analysis.

In both approaches, stories are the basic unit of analysis (Kramp, 2004). Polkinghorne (1995) argues these can be sourced in a variety of ways, such as journal entries, autobiographies, or speeches, however, interviews are most often employed in narrative inquiry.

In the first approach, analysis of narratives, stories are collected as data and analysed according to paradigmatic processes (Polkinghorne, 1995). This results in the identification of themes which may relate to, for example, the type of stories, characters or settings represented in the stories, and the relationships that occur amongst them (Polkinghorne, 1995). In this way, analysis of narratives is similar to other approaches used in qualitative research that are category based, for example, thematic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 2008).

In narrative analysis, experiences are collected and configured by means of a plot into a storied form (Polkinghorne, 1995). As such, this approach aligns with narrative knowing (Polkinghorne, 1995). In narrative analysis, events and actions are related to one another by constructing them into a coherent 'whole' (Polkinghorne, 1995). Through a process of 'toing-and-froing' between the data and emerging thematic plots, a final storied narrative is created by the researcher which "must fit the data while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in themselves" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 16). This process can be referred to as 'restorying' (Kramp, 2004).

Kramp (2004) argues that it is possible to use both analysis of narratives and narrative analysis together, since one complements the other; "used together, they provide a rich analysis of the stories your research participants shared with you in their interviews " (Kramp, 2004, p. 120).

3.5.2 Approaches to Narrative Inquiry

Whether a researcher chooses to apply analysis of narratives or narrative analysis to their data, a variety of approaches to narrative inquiry exist (Lewis, 2017). This diversity is influenced by the various perspectives and fields of narrative researchers (Allen, 2017). Additionally, clear, step-by-step accounts of how to analyse data as may be expected for other qualitative methods, such as interpretive phenomenological analysis, are rare (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008). The following sections will briefly describe some of the approaches which were felt to be most relevant to the current research.

Riessman (2008) suggests four broad approaches which she collectively defines as forms of narrative analysis: thematic, structural, dialogic/performance and visual. Themes are identified by interpreting the chronological account as a whole (Riessman, 2008), arguably, aligning with Polkinghorne's (1995) paradigmatic analysis of narratives. Riessman (2008) urges narrative researchers not to consider these methods as a set of disciplinary practices, but rather that they can be adapted and combined.

Squire et al. (2008) distinguish between two approaches to narrative inquiry: event-centred and experience-centred analysis. Event-centred analysis is discussed in relation to the work of Labov (1972) (as cited in Squire et al., 2008). According to this approach, narrative structure is analysed in order to identify sequences that recur in the stories told about experiences (Riessman, 2008). However, it is argued that if used in isolation, a Labovian approach can reduce narratives to a simplistic form, not taking context or the subjectivity of experience into account (Riessman, 2008; Squire et al., 2008).

According to Squire et al. (2008) experience-centred narrative research considers personal narratives to be meaningful and sequenced. This approach to analysis is similar to Riessman's (2008) description of thematic narrative analysis. Squire et al. (2008) argue that whilst it may resemble other forms of qualitative analysis, "experience-centred narrative analysis is distinguished by its attention to the sequencing and progression of themes within interviews, their transformation and resolution. Thus, it foregrounds the specifically narrative aspects of texts' meanings" (Squire et al., 2008, p. 50).

Lieblich et al. (1998) also offer a model for classifying different types of, what they term, narrative analysis. They describe approaches to analysis in narrative research according to two dimensions: 'holistic versus categorical' (that is, the whole story is the unit of analysis versus the themes or categories which constitute the story) and 'content versus form'(the story itself

versus how the story is told) (Lieblich et al., 1998). Lieblich et al. (1998) suggest it is helpful to consider their model as a representation of two continua. As such, concentrating on one form of analysis does not mean that others are irrelevant or will not overlap in some way (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Finally, Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) approach to narrative inquiry in the field of education is influenced by a Deweyan view of experience, particularly in terms of the relationships between interaction and continuity. They suggest any narrative inquiry can be defined by a three-dimensional space, "with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). Using this as a framework, the three-dimensional space offers the researcher a structure from which to develop an understanding of a lived experience, and offers an opportunity to capture as much of the "openness of experience" as possible (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 89). Having analysed the collected narratives, they are subsequently re-written or 'restoried' by the researcher into a chronology (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

The variability in approaches to narrative inquiry may appear somewhat ambiguous and this can raise questions regarding the subjectivity of the researcher (Bell, 2002). However, narrative inquiry is not concerned with offering objective truths. Arguably, what may present as ambiguity in the methods described reflects the complex nature of human experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Consequently, through narrative, a researcher is able to "present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness" (Bell, 2002, p. 209).

3.5.3 Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher in Narrative Inquiry

Underlying the concept of narrative is a recognition that experience is an interactional process, shaped by context and the individuals who are engaged in it (Caine et al., 2013). Arguably, the same recognition should be given to the process of conducting narrative inquiry, specifically, the interactions that occur between a researcher and their participants. By engaging in narrative inquiry, researchers acknowledge narratives shared by participants will be dependent on factors including who is telling the story, to whom, and the context in which it is being shared (Kramp, 2004). Consequently, narratives and their meaning are jointly constructed (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry is considered a collaboration between a researcher and their participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The relationship that is formed between the teller and the listener impacts the richness of the story being told (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Lieblich et al., 1998) and throughout the process of narrative inquiry, researchers interpret the experience shared by

the story teller (Kramp, 2004). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this process as "living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives…simply stated…narrative inquiry is stories lived and told" (p. 20).

In addition, researchers come to narrative inquiry with their own attitudes, beliefs and views; their personal narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Being aware of the impact these personal narratives have on the research process involves reflexive practice, which is a key tenet of narrative inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Reflexivity is a tool used by researchers to engage in critical self-awareness and understand how their personal narratives influence their interactions throughout the research process, including their interpretations of the findings (Finlay, 2002).

The underlying assumptions of reflexivity align with social constructionism and narrative theory, emphasising the significance of researcher-participant dynamics and suggesting how interaction, discourse and shared meanings will inevitably influence research findings (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity will be discussed further in Chapter 5. However, the researcher has also endeavoured to incorporate their reflections on various aspects of the research process throughout the remaining sections of this chapter.

3.6 Research Participants

3.6.1 The Participants

The research employed a purposeful sampling method as this allowed for participants to be selected based on the purpose and aims of the research (Robson & McCartan, 2017).

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that "one general guideline for sample size in qualitative research is not only to study a few sites or individuals but also to collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied" (p. 158). The aim of the current research was not to generalise its findings to a larger population, but to gain an in depth understanding of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school, through the exploration of narratives.

Small groups of participants are expected in narrative research due to the depth of analysis it requires (Lieblich et al., 1998). Six participants were initially sought to take part in the research, these being two primary school pupils, two parents and two staff members. It was anticipated that a sample of this size would be appropriate for a narrative inquiry, given that it is concerned with gathering, rich, detailed data.

Participation in the research was determined by the inclusion criteria. The pupils who took part in the study had all experienced permanent exclusion from primary school within the past two years. None of the pupils had experienced their permanent exclusion less than four weeks prior to the interview. Similarly, the pupils' parents and staff members met the same inclusion criteria.

Due to the emotive and sensitive nature of the experience, the possibility that participants' wellbeing could be impacted by taking part in the research too soon had to be considered. Consequently, participation was limited to pupils who had experienced permanent exclusion no less than four weeks prior to the interview. The researcher also felt that the period of two years was a suitable time frame to reduce any potential distress to participants, whilst the exclusion was likely to have been recent enough for participants to recall their experience.

Initially, the sample consisted of three primary school children, including the pilot study pupil. Unfortunately, one child was withdrawn from the study prior to their interview taking place due to personal circumstances. The final sample (for which pseudonyms have been used) consisted of two primary school pupils (Gregg and Connor), three parents (Jennifer, Laura and Hazel), a deputy headteacher (Natalie) and a headteacher (Lisa). Natalie and Lisa worked in the same mainstream school and chose to have a joint interview as they both knew the pupil well at the time of their permanent exclusion. The pupils were aged 10 (Connor) and six (Gregg) at the time of their interviews, and nine (Connor) and five (Gregg) years of age at the time of their permanent exclusion. All participants were English speaking.

3.6.2 Barriers to Recruitment

Barriers to recruiting participants were experienced in both the alternative provision and mainstream schools. Feedback from the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) of the alternative provision suggested that many parents were concerned about their child revisiting the experience of their permanent exclusion and felt that it could cause them distress.

The researcher originally planned to address this issue by arranging a date to visit the provision in person, soon after the information sheets had been shared with parents. It was hoped this could have provided parents with an opportunity to meet the researcher, ask questions and voice concerns they may have had prior to making their decision to take part. However, many of the parents did not drop their children off or lived some way from the provision, so for practical reasons this could not be arranged.

Time and workload appeared to be barriers for the recruitment of staff members in one of the mainstream schools contacted. For example, when invited to take part in the research, Lisa initially voiced concerns about the pressures her staff were under and felt that taking part in the research could exacerbate this for teachers especially. Due to pressures on their time, the interview with Natalie and Lisa took place after school.

The researcher struggled to make contact with the headteachers of the other two mainstream schools despite continued efforts over several months. Having some knowledge of the schools in the local area, the researcher was aware that both the schools concerned had experienced high levels of staff changes over a short period of time. Given the pressures the schools were undoubtedly facing because of this, it is likely that taking part in this research was not a priority for them.

3.6.3 Participant Pseudonyms

All participants were offered the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms and those for other characters in their narratives, for example, their child, the pupil or a sibling. Research suggests names can evoke certain characteristics or pre-conceptions about a person, having the power to influence how an individual is positioned and perceived by others (Hurst, 2008; Lahman et al., 2015). This aligns with positioning theory (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009), which, similarly to the concept of narrative, suggests our lives unfold through various 'story lines'. Within these storylines, we position ourselves and others by the language we use in social encounters (Harré et al., 2009).

In research, a pseudonym can therefore hold similar power, impacting how the participant is perceived by the reader. Allen and Wiles (2015) argue that whilst the use of pseudonyms is well-established as an act of responsible and ethical research, engaging participants in the process of choosing their pseudonyms is meaningful and can reflect details of their lives that are pertinent to their narratives.

In the current research, participants were offered the opportunity to choose pseudonyms when the researcher shared their storied narratives with them. This allowed the participants to decide on a name for themselves which they felt reflected their storied selves.

Similarly, other named characters in the participants' narratives had personalities of their own and these were portrayed through the stories told by participants. These characters were individuals who had significant roles in participants' lives and were mentioned regularly

throughout the interview. It was during the process of writing the storied narratives that the researcher recognised the names of these characters should be just as meaningful to participants as their own pseudonyms.

The participants were encouraged to choose pseudonyms that would not be identifiable to themselves or others in their stories, for example, by avoiding using middle names. Only three participants (Connor, Gregg and Jennifer) wished to choose their own pseudonyms, with the majority of the adults preferring to let the researcher decide. Where this was the case, the researcher chose names they felt best suited the participants' characters. The researcher acknowledged that in doing so they were undoubtedly influenced by personal experiences and interactions with individuals in their own lives.

Conversely, all but one of the adults chose to name the other characters in their narratives themselves. The researcher wondered if this preference to name others in their stories, particularly the child, reflected the connection they had with that character and how important they felt it was to depict them in a particular way.

3.6.4 Recruitment Method

The children and parents in the sample were recruited from one alternative provision in a LA. The headteacher of the alternative provision was contacted by the researcher, introduced to the research and invited to take part (please refer to Appendix B, page 168). The researcher was invited to attend a meeting with the headteacher and SENCO in order to discuss their participation in the research. Following this, consent was provided by the headteacher for their setting to take part.

The SENCO of the alternative provision was asked by the researcher to identify all pupils who met the inclusion criteria. All parents whose children met the inclusion criteria were provided with the research information and consent forms (Appendix C, page 171) by the SENCO which invited them to participate in the research with their child. Parents who wished to participate completed the consent form and returned them to the SENCO. This process ensured that the researcher did not know personal details of parents and pupils who chose not to participate.

After receiving parental consent, the SENCO of the alternative provision shared the pupil information leaflet with the pupils (Appendix D, page 175). The SENCO informed the researcher which of the pupils wished to participate and dates were arranged for the researcher to meet with the pupils at the provision. The researcher met with each pupil individually on

two separate occasions before their interviews took place. During the first visit, the researcher ensured the pupils understood the nature of the research, including ethical issues such as their right to withdraw, before asking them to sign a consent form (Appendix E, page 176). The purpose of the second visit was to build further rapport with the pupils through activities such as drawing and playing games.

The researcher contacted parents via telephone in order to arrange a date for their interviews to take place. All parents were offered an opportunity to meet with the researcher in person prior to the interview if they wished and invited to contact the researcher with any questions or queries via telephone or email.

The recruitment method for the mainstream school staff could not take place until parents provided consent for their child's excluding school to be contacted. The mainstream headteacher of the excluding school was contacted by the researcher. This was aided by the SENCO of the alternative provision who provided the name of the child's excluding school. Where the researcher was able to speak to the mainstream headteacher on the telephone, the researcher explained the nature of the research with them and invited them to take part. The headteacher was then sent the information sheets and consent forms via email prior to making a final decision (Appendix F, page 178). If the researcher was unable to contact the mainstream head teacher directly, they sent the information sheet and consent form to their email address which was provided by staff on the school's reception. The researcher ensured that emails did not contain any personal details of the pupils who had been excluded as they could not be sent via secure email. The researcher made several attempts to contact the headteachers via telephone and email in order to confirm whether they would be providing consent to participate in the research.

Where the member of staff of the excluding school being interviewed was not the headteacher, a further information sheet and consent form was shared with the member of staff who knew the child at the time of their permanent exclusion (Appendix G, page 181). This was given to the staff member by the headteacher. Once informed consent from the member of staff was obtained, their details were shared with the researcher and a date was arranged for the interview to take place.

Appendix H (page 184) provides a timeline of the research procedure from recruitment through to the thesis write up.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the current research was obtained from the University of East London (Appendix I, page 185) in addition to the Local Authority in which the research took place. Ethical guidelines and procedures published by the British Psychological Society (BPS) Ethics Committee (2018), Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (2016) and the University of East London Graduate School (2017) were followed throughout the research process.

The researcher adhered to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines throughout the research. The researcher did not have access to any personal information of pupils, parents or staff prior to their informed consent. All interview data was stored on an encrypted device, and participants' drawings, life grids and timelines were also kept in a secure location. Any identifying features of persons, settings or local authorities discussed in the interviews were omitted or anonymised, either by the researcher or the participant.

The initial information letter for all participants provided parents, pupils and staff members with full details of the research purpose, including information regarding their right to withdraw at any time, confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were informed that the original research data may be kept for up to three years should the researcher choose to publish the research and were reminded of their right to withdraw. All participants were offered the opportunity to ask the researcher questions prior to interviews in pre-arranged meetings or telephone conversations if they wished to do so. Efforts were made to provide pupils with an age-appropriate information leaflet which the SENCO at the alternative provision shared with them. During the initial meetings with the pupils, the researcher ensured they understood the purpose of the research, including the issue of confidentiality and their right to withdraw using age appropriate language.

All participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any time before, during and after the interviews took place. This was reiterated on the debrief sheets provided by the researcher after the interviews had taken place. Please see Appendices J (page 188), K (page 189) and L (page 190) for the parent, school staff and pupil debrief sheets respectively.

Efforts were also taken to ensure that recalling the experience of permanent exclusion did not result in emotional distress for participants. This included the decision that pupils could not have experienced permanent exclusion within four to six weeks prior to interviews commencing. The researcher additionally held two sessions with the pupils prior to the

interviews. These additional sessions helped the researcher to build rapport with the pupils, and for the pupils to feel more at ease with the researcher during the interviews.

Appropriate safeguarding procedures were followed throughout the data collection process and if any participants were to disclose information which put themselves or others at risk, the researcher was aware of the appropriate steps to take in reporting their concerns. A full risk assessment was also completed prior to the research taking place. This included the issue of parental interviews which all took place in the family home. For all parent interviews, the researcher followed their local authority's guidelines with regards to home visiting.

3.8 Data Collection

3.8.1 Eliciting Participants' Narratives Through Interviews

In order to answer the current research question, 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?', the researcher sought a method of data collection which would provide participants with the opportunity to tell their experience of permanent exclusion in their own words. Interviews were considered to be most appropriate as they offer a degree of flexibility in terms of their structure and can be led by the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Additionally, interviews are most often employed in narrative research since they provide an opportunity for participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Semi-structured interviews are most common in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher is guided by a checklist of topics, however, the wording and order of questions are often modified as the interview develops (Robson & McCartan, 2017). Conversely, unstructured interviews are more participant led. Whilst the researcher may have a general area of interest they wish to explore, the conversation develops following the participant's lead (Robson & McCartan, 2017).

With regards to narrative research, Riessman (2008) suggests that:

> Creating possibilities in research interviews for extended narration requires investigators to give up control…although we have particular paths we want to cover related to the substantive and theoretical foci of our studies…narrative interviewing necessitates following participants down their trails (p. 24).

The current researcher felt that it was important for participants to be able to follow their own 'trails' in the research interview. The format of a semi-structured interview could restrict

opportunities for participants to explore details of their narratives that were meaningful to them (Robson & McCartan, 2017). Therefore, the decision was made to conduct unstructured interviews, as this would provide participants with the freedom to tell their narratives in their own way (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Topics covered during the interviews were determined by the areas participants chose to include on their life grids. This will be discussed in further detail in the following section. An interview schedule was also developed which provided the researcher with prompts, such as 'Can you tell me more about that?', and a script for introducing the life-grid. Questions were included which encouraged the participants to reflect on their narrative at the end of the interview. For example, 'Looking back over our conversation, how do you feel about the experience of telling your story? What has it been like for you?'. The copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix M, page 191.

All interviews were recorded using a dictaphone in order to aid the transcription process and allow the researcher to fully engage in the interview without the need to take notes. Interviews took place in participants' homes (for the parent interviews) or in a quiet room in the educational setting (for school staff and pupil interviews). The length of each interview ranged between twenty minutes and two hours, with the pupil interviews being the shortest.

3.8.2 Life Story Grids

Life story grids were used during interviews in order to support participants in the telling of their narratives. Life story grids allow participants to create a visual representation of different times in their lives. Critical moments they feel are significant in their narrative are placed along a line which represents a passage of time (Wilson, Cunningham-Burley, Bancroft, Backett-Milburn, & Masters, 2007). Whilst life story grids present events temporally, the aim is not for the interview to be structured rigidly around them. Instead, it can be used flexibly, allowing the participant to move between and modify events as their narrative unfolds (Wilson et al., 2007).

Elliott (2005) suggests that it can be easier for interviewees to discuss experiences relating to specific times and places, rather than very general timeframes (as cited in Riessman, 2008). Lieblich et al. (1998) describe using life story grids in their narrative research to represent particular ages or stages in participants' lives. In the current research, it was felt that the use of a life story grid could be used in a similar way and would complement the unstructured nature of the interviews, assisting participants to organise their narratives in a way that would remain meaningful to them.

The life story grids were adapted from those described in previous research (O'Connor, Hodkinson, Burton, & Torstensson, 2011; Wilson et al., 2007) and structured the parent and school staff interviews. Please refer to Appendix N (page 192) for an example of a completed life grid. The purpose of the life story grid was explained to participants using a script which is included in the interview schedule (Appendix M, page 191).

The researcher shared examples of completed life story grids with the participants in order to illustrate the types of events they could choose to include. They were then provided with a blank grid which the researcher filled in using the descriptions provided by the participant.

Previous research with children and young people has adapted the concept of life grids and used time lines to explore experiences of education (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Jalali & Morgan, 2018; O'Connor et al., 2011). Following initial meetings with the pupils in the current research, the researcher felt a visual timeline would help to engage the pupils in the process of sharing their narratives. Additionally, it could provide a structure for the pupils to refer to, offering them prompts for what they might like to talk about next. This was largely influenced by their age and language level, however, it was also felt that an element of predictability to the interview could help to ease any anxiety the pupils may have had about talking about their exclusion with the researcher.

The researcher developed a timeline for pupils adapted from those used by Jalali and Morgan, (2018) and O'Connor et al. (2011) (Appendix O, page 193). Each school year, starting from nursery through to the present day was presented along the timeline. School years, as opposed to ages, were considered events that would most likely be relevant to all the pupils' and could potentially trigger memorable moments in their lives that related to their experience of permanent exclusion.

At the start of the interviews, pupils were introduced to the concept of a timeline and invited to add or replace any events they felt were significant for them in their narrative. Pupils were then asked to start at the beginning of the timeline and talk through the events that occurred at each point, using prompts such as 'Tell me about when you were in Year...' The researcher also invited pupils to talk about what they liked or didn't like at different stages of their education. As the conversation progressed, the pupils noted further critical moments, such as their permanent exclusion, which the researcher recorded on the timeline with their agreement.

The timeline was used as a conversation aid, however, the pupils were also offered the opportunity to draw pictures as they explored their experiences. Drawing is a medium through

which children are able to express knowledge and understanding and can be a useful tool to support them in telling stories about themselves (Prior & Niesz, 2013). Furthermore, from personal experience working with children and young people in schools, the researcher was aware that some of the pupils may have felt more comfortable to express their experiences using a method which relied less heavily on language.

3.9 Pilot Study

Pilot studies offer an opportunity to test the suitability of research methods in relation to the research question (Robson & McCartan, 2017). In the current research, a pilot study was conducted to trial the use of an unstructured interview approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and to test the suitability of the life story and time line tools.

Participants for the pilot study were recruited using the same method as those in the main study, from the same alternative provision. The researcher initially hoped to recruit participants for the pilot study from a different alternative provision, however, they did not receive any interest from the setting they approached. One parent and one child took part in the pilot study, and both interviews were included in the final analysis.

Feedback from the parent who took part in the pilot study was positive with regards to the structure of the interview and the usability of the life story grid. They felt that it was helpful to be able to map their narrative before telling it and the grid acted as a useful reminder for what to talk about next. As the interview progressed, the parent referred and went back to various points on their life story grid. The parent reflected that having the flexibility to move between events on their life story grid felt a more natural way to tell her story.

The timeline similarly acted as a useful prompt for guiding the research interview with the pupil. The researcher found that they had to offer more prompts and questions compared to the parent interview to support the pupil in telling their narrative, for example, 'Tell me about what you liked/didn't like about…'. The various points on the timeline therefore provided useful conversation starters which, whilst providing structure to the interview, still allowed the pupil to tell their story in as much or as little detail as they wanted to. They could also move between the stages on the timeline depending on what felt important and relevant to their story.

The pupil chose to draw on two occasions during the pilot study. When the pupil felt they couldn't remember anything, drawing helped to open up the conversation and often prompted them to talk more about their experience in school.

The researcher also found conducting a pilot study was particularly useful for understanding their own role in the construction of participants' narratives. Specifically, the researcher reflected on their use of probes and the types of questions they were using to support the pupil in telling their narrative. For example, whilst the use of open questions such as 'Tell me about Reception…' is better suited to an unstructured style of interview, the researcher found that more directive questions such as 'Tell me what was good/bad about being in Reception' tended to aid the pupil's recall of events and led to further discussion.

Irwin and Johnson (2005) describe a similar experience from their interviews with children, and suggest that the complexities of open ended questions could make a child feel uncomfortable, particularly as they require a higher level of receptive and expressive language skills (Irwin & Johnson, 2005).

However, the researcher was very conscious of the pupil's wellbeing and that too many prompts could equally have led them to feel pressured to share details of their experience they may not have wanted to. The rapport the researcher had built with the pupil was important in being able to gauge when it may have been more appropriate to provide a prompt, versus giving the child more space and time to process a question.

The pilot study was therefore a reflexive process for the researcher which provided them with useful reflections to consider prior to the next pupil interview. No subsequent changes were made to the structure of the pupil or parent interviews following the outcomes of the pilot study.

3.10 Analysis of Participants' Narratives

Recordings of participants' interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Whilst time consuming, this helped the researcher to become familiar with their data and develop an understanding of the participants' narratives which would later aid the 'restorying' phase of analysis.

Riessman (2008) argues there is no universal form to transcription, and decisions regarding the level of detail to include depends on factors regarding a study's aims and theoretical concerns. The current research is concerned with 'what' rather than 'how' stories are told about the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. As such, finer details regarding speech, such as intonation, were not included in the transcriptions.

Paralinguistic features, such as laughter, crying and long pauses were included in the transcripts. Whilst they were not analysed, it was felt that to omit them could overlook contextual information regarding the story being told.

When transcribing the interviews, the researcher referred to the notation system provided by Braun and Clarke (2013). An example of a transcript can be found in Appendix P (page 194).

3.10.1 Restorying Participants' Narratives

The purpose of this first stage of analysis was to re-write participants' narratives into a storied form, based on Polkinghorne's (1995) narrative analysis approach. As described by (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002), "restorying is the process of gathering stories, analysing them for key elements of the story (e.g., time, place, plot and scene), and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence" (p. 332).

Through the configuration of participants' narratives into a storied account, it was possible to bring together emotions, interactions, context and events that together formed their experience (Polkinghorne, 1995). In doing so, the researcher was able to represent the detail and richness of participants stories to the reader (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

To provide structure to the restorying process, Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space was used to analyse the transcribed interviews. As previously discussed, social interaction and context play key roles in the construction of narratives. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space reflects Dewey's (1963) philosophy of experience, which suggests that in order to understand individuals, one needs to explore both their personal experiences and their interactions with other people (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

The researcher felt that the three-dimensional space offered a framework which encompassed a holistic view of experience, including factors regarding context, interactions, feelings and thoughts. It also gave attention to continuity, allowing the researcher to capture a sense of participants' experience over time. This aligned with the tools used during the interviews to help the participants tell their stories according to different points in time. Figure 2 provides a pictorial representation of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space.

The process of analysis began with the researcher reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews according to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space. To aid this process, the researcher used colour coding to identify the different elements of the three-dimensional framework in each transcript (Appendix Q, page 196). This information was then

transferred to the three-dimensional framework using a grid, similar to that depicted in Figure 2. Please see Appendix R (page 202) for examples.

It was then possible to identify excerpts from the transcript which shared similar themes or topics, and group these according to units of meaning, or 'stanzas'. Riessman (2008) refers to the use of stanzas as a way of organising transcribed speech (Riessman, 2008), whilst Clandinin and Connelly (2000) similarly describe dividing a chronology "into labeled sections with titles that refer to theoretical interpretations" (p. 160). Furthermore, whilst the interviews were guided by events on the life grids or timelines, the nature of the interviews meant that participants' telling of their stories did not always follow an organised structure, as can be the case in any spontaneous conversation. Re-organising the transcripts according to stanzas therefore allowed the researcher to make better sense of participants' stories.

The researcher created 'interim narratives', which drew together direct quotes from the transcripts according to each stanza. These 'interim narratives' acted as the basis for the final 'storied narratives' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Appendix S (page 209) illustrates this process.

When composing the 'storied narratives', the researcher incorporated words and phrases used by participants as much as possible in order to capture the distinctiveness of their experiences (Kramp, 2004). Furthermore, the decision was made to write the final storied narratives in the third person. By doing so, the researcher was able to express the thoughts, feelings and experiences from the narrator's perspective, yet also acknowledge the narratives were co-constructed.

Following this process, the storied narratives were shared with participants. As the owners of their stories, the participants were considered best placed to inform the researcher of the authenticity and validity of the storied narratives. Actively involving the participants in this stage of the research allowed the researcher to 'check' the narrative, reducing the potential gap between the told narrative and the storied narrative (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

The storied narratives were shared with five of the participants face to face. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 during the latter stages of the research this was not possible for two of the participants, and their storied narratives were instead shared via a secure email system, followed up by a phone conversation.

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Interaction		Continuity			Situation
Personal	*Social*	*Past*	*Present*	*Future*	*Context*
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view

Figure 2 - Clandinin & Connelly's (2000) Three-Dimensional Space Framework. Adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and (Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002)

During these discussions, the participants offered their feedback on their narratives and many reflected on the experience of telling and reading back their storied narratives. Several felt that it had been somewhat therapeutic. Others reiterated feeling that it was important for their stories to be heard. As previously described, it was during this stage that participants were invited to choose pseudonyms for themselves and other named characters in their stories. Participants' storied narratives can be found in Chapter 4.

3.10.2 Identifying Participants' Shared Storylines

The second phase of analysis explored to what extent the narratives collected shared common experiences or 'storylines'. By identifying these 'shared storylines', the researcher hoped to answer the central research question, 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?' in greater depth.

This phase drew on Polkinghorne's (1995) analysis of narratives approach, where themes are inductively derived from the stories collected. In the case of the current research, the 'stories collected' were the storied narratives created in the first phase of analysis. The process of

identifying shared storylines also drew on several of the paradigmatic approaches discussed previously (Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 2008; Squire et al., 2008).

Firstly, each stanza in the six storied narratives was analysed according to the experiences or storylines it portrayed. These were colour coded and the stanzas which were found to have common, or 'shared story lines' were grouped according to 'Narrative themes'. 'Narrative themes' therefore represented clusters or groups of stanzas which depicted similar experiences. Appendix T (page 218) provides examples of the process used to identify and colour code the shared storylines.

Following the identification of 'Narrative themes', 'Sub themes' were also identified in some cases. These consisted of experiences which shaped or contributed towards the overall 'Narrative theme' in some way. Further details and the 'Narrative themes' and 'Sub themes' identified are provided in Chapter 4.

Although this phase of analysis was concerned with finding commonalities, the researcher did not wish to de-contextualise or take emphasis away from the individuality and distinctiveness of the individual narratives. Instead, it was hoped that this process would provide further insight into the meaning of participants' narratives and offer an 'overview' of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. It is therefore important that the findings of this stage of analysis are considered alongside, and not separately to, the final storied narratives.

3.11 Reflections on Ethical Issues in Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that relationships underpin all stages of narrative inquiry, including ethical considerations and practices. As Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015) suggest, re-telling someone else's story can provoke questions regarding issues of power, authority and entitlement.

At the start of the research process, the researcher was faced with similar ethical dilemmas. These came about after having met with the pupils for the first time. Whilst reading through the pupil information leaflet with them, the researcher was struck by how uncomfortable it made them feel to use the words 'permanent exclusion'. The sense of permanency and rejection the researcher felt using this language was profound and compelled them to wonder, if this was the impact this language had on them, how must it feel for the pupils to hear these words used about themselves? Saying 'your permanent exclusion' or 'when you were permanently

excluded', equally felt uncomfortable, as it gave a sense that this defined the pupil in some way.

The researcher felt conflicted by this experience. It was vital to ensure the pupils were fully aware of what the research was about, so to have not used 'permanent exclusion' in the information leaflet would have been deceiving. Additionally, it prompted the researcher to reflect on issues of entitlement and what right they had to ask the pupils to revisit their experience of exclusion. Despite their parents giving consent for them to take part, the researcher felt very aware they were asking the pupils to revisit a potentially traumatic experience, whilst being in a position of power. The processes the researcher put in place, such as building rapport with the child, ensuring they understood the research and reminding them of their ability to withdraw from the research at any time, were important in addressing these issues.

The process of writing the participants' storied narratives similarly brought to light additional ethical issues for the researcher. Particularly, the researcher became aware of the importance of ensuring the storied narratives did not include any details which could make the participant, or other characters in their stories identifiable. In most cases, this did not have a significant impact on the overall narrative, however, it did require the researcher to make some decisions regarding what could be included or excluded in the creation of the interim and final storied narratives. This therefore was not only an ethical issue but one which required reflexivity from the researcher.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The current research is underpinned by the principles of social constructionism and relativism. Using a qualitative design, narrative inquiry was employed to explore the central research question; 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?'. The research findings will now be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter Four

Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The research findings will now be presented in relation to the two phases of analysis previously described in Chapter Three. The storied narratives are central to this research and provide the reader with a unique insight into participants' experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school. The following sections of this chapter will first present all six storied narratives, before exploring the ways in which they are connected through shared storylines and experiences.

4.2 Storied Narratives

4.2.1 Gregg's Story

Good Beginnings

Gregg's story starts with Nursery. Things at nursery started well at first, especially because Gregg met his girlfriend there. Looking back, he thinks it was a really good school. Moving to primary school was a new start and it was kind of good; things were fine.

Primary School

Gregg remembers what his primary school looked like well. It was very big and had a huge library, but there weren't many classes. Gregg liked the playground. It was small but it had a long climbing frame. Being in the classroom was fun because they were so colourful, but some of the children would say things to Gregg which made him angry. One day, he got so angry that he threw a chair at one of them. It would also get so noisy that he didn't want to be there anymore. It was really, really bad.

Too much noise

Gregg doesn't like noise. He is like the character Venom, because Venom finds loud noises hard to handle as well. Gregg remembers that the noise started when he was in nursery. He remembers that it got busy with lots of children which was annoying, and it became louder and louder.

It was really noisy in primary school too. The children in his class wouldn't talk, they would shout. The teachers would try to make them quiet by telling everyone to 'Shut up', but then *they* would be shouting too! The noise became too much for Gregg; he thinks it made him crazy, so he had to run. He would run in and out of doors to escape from the noise. Teachers would chase him, but they would shout and this just made Gregg run faster.

Trapped

Gregg felt like he was trapped by the school gates; like a jail. He knew that the teachers would be able to catch him if he tried to climb the gates because he wasn't quick enough. Gregg used to run for the doors instead, but it wasn't easy to escape. He wanted to escape the classroom but the teachers kept trying to bring him back, and that felt hard.

Hiding from criminals

When Gregg was trying to escape, it felt like he was hiding from criminals. He had to think carefully about where to hide and how to outsmart the them. They would jog after him whilst he would sprint. Gregg knew where to hide so that they couldn't find him. When the coast was clear, he would run the opposite way, knowing that when they looked backed, they would see nothing.

Escape plans

Gregg was determined to escape school so he made escape plans. Gregg knew where a lot of the doors were in school. He found the key to one of them and hid it away in his pocket. The plan almost worked, but he dropped the key and the teacher found it.

One night, Gregg felt something change in him. All of a sudden, Gregg gained super speed and he knew that this would help him to finally escape. The next day, when the noise at school became too much, Gregg used his super speed to climb the school wall and he ran home.

Unhelpful teachers

Teachers didn't help Gregg. Instead they chased him, locked doors and brought him back to class again. Sometimes it was like being taken into prison with his hands behind his back.

Gregg thinks the teachers could have done more to help him. They could have run faster to catch him. The best thing they could have done would have been to tell everyone to be quiet, including themselves!

New School

Gregg feels like he was in Year 1 forever. He moved to the school he is at now in Year 2. It was really good to begin with, but like in his primary school, Gregg remembers it getting worse. A couple of days after he started, a big boy in his class did something and made Gregg bad. Luckily, the boy was moved into another class.

Gregg has accepted that this is now his school. Things are generally better here, but some days he thinks it is rubbish. It is still annoying at times and there are some horrible children. Gregg still considers how he might escape and hopes he can get strong enough to climb the high fences one day.

The Future

Gregg doesn't want to be at his old school, and he is never going back. If he were to go to another school in the future, Gregg hopes that he wouldn't have to do homework, because he doesn't have to do it now and he likes that. Gregg can't wait until he is an adult, because then that would mean he wouldn't have to go to school at all.

4.2.2 Connor's Story

Early School Memories

Connor doesn't remember very much about school before Year 4, but the memories he does have are good.

Connor remembers that he stayed in the same school from nursery all the way up to Year 3. He liked that his school was close to his house. He loved nursery and when he started primary school Connor enjoyed it.

Connor remembers climbing a lot of trees in Year 1 and 2 because there was a forest area in the playground. This is what Connor remembers the most before he left and started a new school in Year 4.

The Good and Bad of Year 4

Connor's new school was even closer to his house and he made some good friends whilst he was there, friends he still plays with now.

However, Connor's memories of the teachers in this school were less positive. He found them to be rude and they treated him unfairly. He particularly remembers them locking him in the classroom and not letting him leave. Connor no longer remembers why he was excluded from this school.

A Better School

Now, Connor's school is much better. His friends are better and the building is a lot smaller than his old school. Connor likes smaller schools because there are less stairs and it's easier to get between lessons.

Connor knows his teachers care about him now and this is important to him. They also take him on trips to do things like rock climbing which are really fun.

The Future

Connor would like to go to secondary school in the future. He hopes he can go to the same one as his cousin and thinks his brothers will go there as well. From what he has heard, it sounds good, and it wouldn't take him long to get there. It would also mean he would get to spend more time with his cousin, so that would be good too.

4.2.3 Jennifer's Story

It Started from Preschool

Jennifer remembers that pre-school wasn't the best experience for Jack. Within his first year of starting there, all the staff changed over the six-week summer holiday so when Jack went back in September, everybody was new. This really unsettled Jack and he no longer wanted to go, so he started at a different preschool which was joined to the local school. This had smaller groups and for the year he was there Jack settled quite well.

The Challenges of Starting School

There were issues from the word go when Jack started school full time. Reception wasn't too bad but Year 1 was particularly challenging for Jack and this soon became evident in his behaviours.

Jack's teachers were very good and gave him rewards or put things in place that were just for him. Writing has always been an issue for Jack and Jennifer remembers that Jack would only write if he had a particular pencil his teachers had given him.

Jennifer was having regular meetings with the school about Jack's behaviour being unacceptable. She remembers one occasion where he tried to climb out of the window in the toilets. Jennifer was constantly being called by the school and Jack received a number of internal exclusions before the fixed term exclusions started. Jack would be given a day exclusion here and a day exclusion there for things from non-compliance to upturning tables.

Creating a Support Network

Over time, Jack received more fixed term exclusions at school. He wouldn't co-operate with anyone and his behaviour was also becoming more extreme at home.

Jack's brother, Elliott, was two and a half at the time. Jennifer's husband worked full-time, so it was usually Jennifer who was at home with the children. Having two young children can be hard work in itself, but with Jack's behaviour being as it was, things were challenging at home. Looking back, Jennifer realised that from the age of three Jack's behaviours weren't the normal temper tantrums children display. She started to question her parenting; was it because Jack's the eldest, or that he had had all of her attention for so long?

Jennifer and her husband got to the stage where they were asking, 'What do we do?' 'What do we do when Jack's upturning things in the house and deliberately trashing things?' They decided to move so that they could be closer to Jennifer's family. It would be a support network for them and Jack could have his own bedroom; his own safe haven where he could go to feel calm.

Building Up to the Permanent Exclusion

Moving home also meant moving school. For the first four or five weeks, Jack seemed comfortable there. Yet once he had built a secure relationship with his teacher the same behaviours began to appear as they had done before.

Jack's behaviours escalated. Jennifer remembers being told by one of the teachers that Jack could no longer be on the playground because he wasn't able to cope and he would just explode, so they ended up keeping him in every play time.

Jennifer feels that there was a build up to the permanent exclusion and that the school were waiting for an opportunity to say, 'You're not our problem anymore'. They told Jennifer that they were putting things in place for Jack, including a one to one, but she found out that they weren't. The school wondered why he was failing yet they were putting nothing in place to support him to cope.

It was really upsetting for Jennifer to find out that she was being told one thing and what was happening in school was completely different. Regularly Jennifer was told that it would be best to take Jack home because he wasn't in the right frame of mind to learn. Hearing things like this, it wasn't always easy for Jennifer to hide her frustrations.

Jennifer and her family have had so many interventions through early help assessments, many of them prompted by the school. The school got social services involved once, despite the assessment showing there was no reason for them to be, and Jennifer felt this was yet another way the school were trying to find something wrong at home. Nothing ever changed because so many of the issues were related to school, and they just weren't picking up the pieces.

Fighting the Permanent Exclusion

On the day that Jack was permanently excluded, he had been at the school for less than a year. Jack had received a fixed term exclusion for a few days and Jennifer hadn't been told that he wasn't allowed to be on the school site. Jack went with Jennifer to collect his brother and an incident led to his permanent exclusion.

This was really hard for Jennifer. She fought with the school for them not to exclude Jack. They just kept telling her they would let her know when a decision had been made.

Jennifer had been told that parents don't usually attend exclusion panel meetings, but she needed to know what they were saying about Jack. Jennifer believes that family are the best source of information when it comes to understanding a child, so she felt it was important for her to be there.

It was heart breaking for Jennifer to hear how her child had been putting staff and other children at risk with his behaviour.

The Impact on The Family

The permanent exclusion put a huge strain on the family. Their life went on hold whilst they managed the practicalities of having Jack at home for six weeks.

Jack had a tutor for four hours a week, but he wasn't interested in this at all. Doing the school run was difficult because Jack couldn't go with Jennifer to pick up Elliott. At one point the school wanted Jennifer to pick Elliott up early, but she didn't think it was fair for his education to suffer because of what had happened to Jack. They tried finding Jack a childminder, but due to his additional needs they didn't want to take him.

Jennifer was on maternity leave with their third child by this point, so luckily she was at home. However, Jennifer's husband didn't drive and he had to make sure he was earning enough money to support the family which meant it was difficult for him to pick up Elliott from school. Financially, the cost of permanent exclusion was a worry for them, especially if there was ever a chance it could happen again. It was stressful for everyone.

When a child is excluded, Jennifer feels that the wider impact it will have on the family isn't considered. What if you can't get time off from work? Jennifer wonders what they could have done if she hadn't been on maternity leave.

As a family, they don't talk about the permanent exclusion anymore. Although it will never be forgotten, they hope they can put it behind them and not allow it to have a negative impact on Jack's future.

Alternative Provision Support

Jack was offered a place at the alternative provision and started during the same year of his exclusion. It's not been an easy journey, as there have still been many times when Jack has had to be restrained by staff there.

However, they are specialists in what they do, and Jennifer has seen this in the support they have provided for Jack. They have put action plans in place and understand children who have needs like Jack. Jennifer is quite confident that they are helping Jack, and an important thing for her is that there is amazing communication between her and the staff.

The EHCP

Getting a draft EHCP for Jack felt like a huge achievement and is something which is really significant for Jennifer. For a long time, she has been trying to get other people to acknowledge her frustrations and see that Jack needs extra support.

As a family, they have been pushing for an EHCP for years. SENCOs in mainstream secondary schools were telling them that with his behavioural needs, Jack wouldn't succeed in a mainstream school and seven schools turned him down in total. Ultimately, that is what pushed them to proceed with the process.

Jack's EHCP was initially turned down and Jennifer couldn't face the thought of him going through another permanent exclusion in secondary school. It wouldn't be fair and would make him feel completely worthless.

Jennifer cried on the day she got the phone call to say the decision had been overturned. In a way, getting the EHCP felt like a huge relief after fighting for so long, but it also brings with it worries and questions for Jennifer. Jack is a bright boy and Jennifer worries about whether he will be able to reach his potential. Does he need specialist provision? Will he be able to get GCSEs at the same time as his peers, and go on to better himself in life? Or has the permanent exclusion set Jack up to fail because people weren't able to put what he needed in place from the start?

Jennifer feels she will be criticised by some members of her family for pushing the EHCP through. For years they have told her there is nothing wrong with Jack and she just needed to be firmer with him. Part of her wants to take the EHCP and rub it under their noses, but the other part of her doesn't want them to know about it at all.

As a parent, Jennifer has had to get her head around the fact that her Jack's journey is different to other children's. It's been evident to her from early on that he needs more support than can be offered in mainstream schools and now having the EHCP proves

that Jack has an identifiable need. She reminds herself that the EHCP isn't for her, it's for Jack and it's the best thing for him.

The EHCP process was stressful and trying to prove that Jack needed additional support with missing evidence from his previous school was hard. Without the support of the alternative provision behind them, Jennifer doesn't think they would ever have got this far.

It all feels unknown at the moment. Even though Jennifer has worked in specialist settings herself, she's never experienced her child being in one. She doesn't want to pin all her hopes on it, but she's hoping that having the EHCP will be a turning point for Jack. She knows it isn't a miracle cure, and it will never change who he is, but it's a doorway for him getting the support he needs and importantly deserves. It's also a bit of security, knowing that it won't be so easy for Jack to fall through the net and be permanently excluded for a second time.

One thing it has brought for Jennifer is that the control is partially back in her hands. Now she has a say in which secondary school her son will be going to and there is an opportunity to turn the permanent exclusion into a positive.

Why Did It Have to Get to Crisis Point?

One of Jennifer's biggest frustrations is how things ever got to the point of permanent exclusion in the first place. It's only now that Jack is older and things have become more challenging that people have noticed he needs some support.

Before Jack was excluded, Jennifer told the school she wanted assessments done; could they get the educational psychologist or somebody out to see him? The school would tell her that Jack wasn't severe enough to meet the criteria for that level of support. Jennifer thinks that they had such a big school there must have been other children who were more of a priority for them at the time too.

Jennifer feels it had to reach crisis point before anyone took her seriously and thinks this might be the case for many children who are permanently excluded. She remembers a time when a professional described Jack as a 'naughty boy' and it shocked her that her concerns weren't even taken on board.

Mainstream settings haven't been effective or supportive enough in allowing Jack to thrive. Continuity of care is something which Ofsted are always talking about, so Jennifer wonders why Jack wasn't offered that if it is a given standard?

It was challenging for Jennifer to stay calm when she felt like no one was doing anything for her son. For a while, she and her husband considered home schooling Jack because it was clear that the education system didn't have the capacity or the knowledge to support children with needs like Jack's.

Jennifer put her trust in both the schools Jack attended before he was permanently excluded. At the time, they told her that there was nothing to worry about, so she took their lead. She thought they were doing their best for him but looking back, she can see that they weren't.

Part of the problem was money; there was no funding so they weren't applying for extra support. Jennifer understands schools have processes and red tape to navigate, but it shouldn't take eight years to get some support for a child.

Luckily the local authority pulled through with the EHCP and the alternative provision have helped Jennifer to feel more positive about the next steps in Jack's journey.

Stigma of SEN

Jack would have only just turned five when he started Year 1, yet Jennifer believes he was already labelled as the 'naughty child' in school by that point.

Getting the EHCP has been a positive, but Jennifer worries about the stigma which can be associated with SEN. For Jack in particular, she has concerns about the kinds of comments his peers could make about him attending a special school when he is older. She also worries about the stigma attached to Jack's EHCP and how this will be received by some family members.

Within her friendship groups, there are often times that Jennifer feels she has to explain herself; why Jack is behaving in a certain way or why he isn't listening or following instructions. So, whilst Jennifer wants people to know Jack has SEN, at the same time, she doesn't want *everyone* to know about it.

Experiencing the Unknown

Jack's permanent exclusion was a shock to Jennifer. She didn't know what to expect which made everything feel very unknown, similarly to how the EHCP process feels now.

The experience was stressful, tense and put a strain on Jennifer's mental health. As a parent, she also worries about the impact it has had on Jack's own wellbeing and how it might have had a negative impact on his views about education.

Jennifer doesn't let herself dwell on what happened because she thinks that if she allowed it to it could eat her up forever. She would always be wondering, is it my fault he was permanently excluded? Was it something we did as a family?

It was an emotional experience and at the time Jennifer wanted to scream, shout and tell the school they had failed her child.

She knows she can't go back and change what happened, but if she'd known eight years ago what she knows now, she would have pushed much harder for Jack to get specialist support.

For years, Jennifer was made to believe that Jack's behaviour was her fault and its only in the last few years that she has felt able to stand up and ask people, 'If it's my parenting tell me how my three children aren't all the same?'

The permanent exclusion wasn't an easy journey at all, and a journey which Jennifer doesn't ever want to experience again.

Lack of Support and Guidance

Jennifer felt unsupported with Jack's permanent exclusion and she believes there is a lack of information and guidance available for parents to help them through the process. Various professionals were doing what they had to do in the background, but they didn't ever keep Jennifer updated about what was happening and she felt blind to the process. She spent a lot of time ringing the exclusions team to get information about what was going on, yet as the parent, she felt that they should have been the ones to keep her informed, not the other way around.

Jennifer has a background in early years so prior to the permanent exclusion, she knew about educational psychologists but very little about what other support should have

been available to Jack in school. Similarly, it was through her own research that she found out what the school's responsibilities were following the sixth day of exclusion.

Jennifer finds it frustrating that it's not until the point of crisis that as parent you find out what support is available to you. She noticed when it came to the EHC process, there was far more guidance regarding who to contact compared to when the permanent exclusion happened. It feels almost as if children who have been excluded from school are considered less of a priority compared to those who have an EHCP.

Never Giving Up

Jennifer is the sort of parent who never gives up and will do anything to support her children. From the beginning, she wasn't willing to let Jack be set up to fail which is why she never gave up the fight to get him the support that he needed.

Jennifer strongly believes that with the right scaffolds in place to support them, a child will thrive. To Jennifer, thriving is being able to go above and beyond minimal expectations, to reach potential, whatever that may be.

Jennifer wants her and the family to provide the scaffolding Jack needs to be whatever he chooses in life. Jack is a clever boy and Jennifer wants his opportunities to be endless. She will make sure that the support is always there for this to be possible. Jennifer believes that without a parent's fight, there is no one else to push professionals for the support their children need.

Jennifer doesn't consider herself to be a pushy parent, but she will push Jack as far as he wants to go to reach his goals. She wants Jack to know that his exclusion doesn't have to hang over his head like a black cloud for the rest of his life. She wants him to know that he is worth something, that he isn't the weed in the garden, but the big bright sunflower that shines above it. No matter what her children choose to do, Jennifer will always be proud of them.

Having an Opportunity to be Understood

Jennifer doesn't feel that people realise the implications of permanent exclusion. When Jack was excluded, they just had to deal with it, but permanent exclusion isn't a quick and easy thing you can walk away from.

When something traumatic happens in life, you get some kind of debrief either at work or elsewhere. For Jennifer, the only opportunity she had for this was the exclusion panel, but with so many professionals there it didn't feel like the right place to truly express her feelings.

Talking about the permanent exclusion has been quite nice for Jennifer. Having the opportunity to tell someone what happened, to feel that they care and understand how difficult the journey was for her is something she feels should be part of the permanent exclusion process. For parents to know that they aren't alone, that a permanent exclusion doesn't mean the end of their child's education wouldn't be a bad thing.

Jennifer doesn't know whether Jack ever had the opportunity for a debrief after the permanent exclusion either. It is important to remember that he has emotions like everyone else and Jennifer wonders whether the experience still plays on his mind.

Moving Forward

Looking back now, Jennifer wonders if the permanent exclusion may have been the right decision, as without it, they wouldn't be where they are now.

The next step in Jack's journey is finding a specialist secondary school. Jennifer and her husband won't be alone in this process, as they have the support of Jack's headmistress. Jennifer believes its important to get the perspectives from both home and school, so that they can get a rounded view of a provision and whether it could be the right place for Jack.

Jack loves computers and since he will be going into secondary, Jennifer hopes there will be opportunities for him to do something like this which he will enjoy.

Jennifer wants the right school to be able to give Jack a brighter future by helping him to develop the coping mechanisms he needs to succeed in the workplace. She wants to be able to walk out of a provision, with no unanswered questions and feel confident that they will be able to support him to thrive.

With the right support, Jennifer is certain Jack will be able to reach his dreams. She is determined that there will be light at the end of the tunnel, so that they can put the permanent exclusion behind them and move forward.

4.2.4 Hazel's Story

Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Hazel met Fred, Ben's father, the year her mother passed away. She thinks this could be part of the reason why she stayed with Fred for fifteen years, and what made it so difficult to leave.

It wasn't long after Hazel and Fred moved in together that it all started. Hazel was physically and emotionally abused, yet it became one of those things that just happened, and Hazel got used to it over time.

There are some things Hazel thinks she has forgotten until they come up in conversation with her friends. She knows she shouldn't laugh but some of it was over such silly things, like when she decided to cook some eggs for a salad. However, there were also many times that were really bad. Hazel remembers being strangled, beaten and dragged along the floor. When Hazel fell pregnant, Fred didn't want her to keep the baby, but she refused to terminate the pregnancy.

Things didn't improve when Hazel fell pregnant and there were times when she was afraid something terrible could have happened to her and the baby. Hazel's memory of Ben's first night at home is tainted by what Fred did to her and she wishes it wasn't there.

Hazel says she has been broken many times, but her nature is to laugh everything off. This drives her sister mad but it's the way Hazel manages what she has been through. If she didn't find ways to laugh about it, there used to be a time where she probably wouldn't have been able to walk out of the front door. There are still times when Hazel finds it hard to talk about the past and can become tearful, but that happens less now. Hazel's sister despises Fred, yet, bizarrely, Hazel doesn't feel anything towards him now, not even hatred; there is just nothing.

Hazel knows that Ben is likely to have witnessed some of the things that went on at home and that they will have impacted him somehow. Her sister thinks the children should know what their father has done, but Hazel worries about the affect this could have on them, especially when they are still so young. Hazel doesn't feel ready to tell her children yet, but she knows there will come a time when it will need to be said, and she will need to find the right way to say it.

Separation

When Hazel thinks back to the point at which Ben's behaviour changed, it was probably around the same time that her and Fred separated for the last time.

Hazel had made many attempts to leave Fred before, but none had succeeded. She remembers one time, just before Ben turned one, when they stayed in a women's refuge for a period of time. Looking back, Hazel can see that was the time she should have stayed away, but if she had done, she wouldn't have had Ben's brothers. Hazel believes everything happens for a reason.

When Hazel and Fred did finally separate, it was a well-executed mission which took a lot of preparation. However, it was a very difficult time for Ben. Hazel always reassured him that he didn't have to worry about wanting to see his dad, because of course he still loved his dad. Yet Ben felt torn between Hazel and Fred and didn't want to upset anybody. He couldn't cope with it.

Ben struggled the most when it came to dropping him off at Fred's. Hazel just wanted to see the children off safely, but Fred would always come out and this used to panic Ben. He'd plead with his dad just to go inside.

Ben was very anxious during the separation whereas his brothers seemed less bothered by it. Hazel wonders if this is because they didn't witness things at home to the same extent that Ben did. The hardest thing for Ben was that it wasn't a quick separation; it went on for months, with Fred coming to the house or trying to contact them every day. It was a very stressful and unsettling period for everyone, particularly Ben.

Breakdown at Primary School

Ben went through nursery and started primary school without any issues. He stayed all day and was doing what he had to do. However, everything changed in Year Three, around the time that Hazel and Fred separated. Ben just couldn't behave; he was running off, rolling about or trashing the classroom, and the way he reacted to things changed. It felt like there was just a total breakdown.

Eventually, Ben's timetable was reduced and for quite a while Hazel was regularly called to go and collect him from school. Ben would throw objects, upend furniture and pull down displays. Hazel recalls the teachers having to remove the other children from

the classroom because Ben had gone crackers. Hazel doubts that Ben did any learning for a whole school year.

Finally, the school told Hazel that they couldn't carry on with things the way they were. They didn't want to exclude Ben, but Hazel thinks they would have done if he'd stayed because they couldn't manage his behaviour.

A managed move was suggested but Hazel didn't see how that would help. The decision was made for Ben to move schools completely.

Diagnoses

Towards the end of Year 3, Ben was assessed for ADHD and ODD. It took a while for the diagnoses to be made as there was some uncertainty as to whether his behaviours were trauma related, since some of the traits can present very similarly.

Ben was given medication to begin with, however, the effects of it were awful and made Ben worse so Hazel decided to stop it; they could manage without it. After Ben was diagnosed, Hazel was offered all sorts of help. Her response to this was, 'Well I didn't need it yesterday, so I don't need it today!' To Hazel, it doesn't matter what letters of the alphabet they put next to his name, Ben is still the same, he's just Ben.

New Primary School

Hazel began the process of finding Ben a new school. The school admissions team were in touch with her regularly but there were only so many schools who had places available.

Hazel contacted several schools. The first didn't have a SENCO, so that would have been useless for Ben. When Hazel contacted the second school, the head teacher was so rude to her that it put Hazel off completely. She didn't want Ben to go to the last school on the list, but it was really the only option left.

Initially, Ben was quite keen to start at his new primary school and it seemed liked everything would be fine. Unfortunately, it didn't work at all. Ben was again put on a reduced timetable and Hazel was told he had to go home for lunch. Meanwhile, she was trying to juggle work whilst also caring for her other children. It was a nightmare. Ben was in school for two hours a day and Fred wasn't willing to help Hazel. Fortunately, her sister and neighbour offered to look after Ben on various days, but with the best

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will in the world, they still had their own lives to lead. Hazel still had bills to pay and children to feed, yet she took time off to care for Ben because she considers him her responsibility. All in all, Hazel was off work for four months during that year.

The whole experience was hell. Every day, Hazel would get a phone call at work asking her to pick Ben up from school. She felt helpless because she didn't know why Ben was behaving the way he was and Ben wasn't able to tell her.

Looking back, it can be easy for Hazel to forget how awful it was because things are so much better now, but at the time, it was a real nightmare.

Permanent Exclusion

Not long before the permanent exclusion, an incident with Fred led to Ben having to speak to a social worker. It was another stressful experience for him, and Hazel feels it was too much for him to manage.

It was the final straw the day the permanent exclusion happened. Hazel remembers that Ben had gone absolutely crackers and when she arrived at the school the staff were restraining him.

All Hazel wanted to do was get Ben out of the situation and take him home. The school wanted to speak to her, and whilst she appreciated Ben shouldn't have been doing what he was doing, she could see he was distressed and just wanted to get him out of there. The school were adamant she stayed and eventually Ben calmed down.

The school wanted to speak to Hazel on her own, but she felt Ben should know what was happening. He was ten years old and wasn't a silly boy. Hazel felt he should know what the consequences were going to be.

Fred wanted to appeal the decision to permanently exclude Ben but Hazel didn't agree. Whether the exclusion had happened or not, Ben wasn't happy there and it was in his best interests to leave.

The Move to the Alternative Provision

Ben wanted to go back to his first primary school because they didn't exclude him and he liked everyone there. Hazel had to explain that they liked him too, but they couldn't manage his behaviour. Soon after Ben's exclusion he was offered a place at the alternative provision. Hazel told him that the class sizes would be small and that there

would be other children there with the same issues as him, so he came round to the idea of it.

Unfortunately, they came up against a problem which lead to Ben being out of education for three or four months before he could start there. Staff from the alternative provision had planned to meet with Hazel and Ben at home and when Fred turned up, the last thing Hazel wanted was to have him in her house. Unfortunately, she had no choice because Fred also had parental responsibility.

Fred talked and talked, but Ben had questions *he* wanted to ask. He was worried about getting in the taxi with a stranger, but he was soon reassured and wanted to start as soon as possible. However, Fred refused to allow Ben to get in the taxi. Ben was devastated; he was desperate to go to school and thought he had lost his chance. Hazel couldn't take Ben herself because she had to take his brothers to school.

Hazel was so frustrated. Everybody was telling her about Ben's legal right to be educated, yet they were listening to a man who didn't feed, clothe or care for him, who had no bearing on Ben's life. It didn't make any sense. Hazel contacted all the people she could think of who had worked with Ben since nursery and explained the situation. The next day, she was receiving phone calls from them. Eventually, it was a social worker who argued the case that they should be acting in Ben's best interests and within a few weeks, Ben and Hazel were invited to visit the alternative provision.

Impact of Past Events

Hazel recognises that the events Ben witnessed at home are a part of his story. Ben's relationship with his youngest brother isn't the best, and Hazel doesn't know if this is because he is quieter and softer by nature compared to Ben. Sometimes, Hazel worries about the similarities she notices between Ben and his father. She hopes this is something they can change.

Hazel has been told by various people that some of the reasons why Ben is how he is are because of trauma related or learnt behaviours. She remembers the kinds of things Ben would have witnessed at two years old and although she thinks he probably can't remember them now, she can't imagine they would have had a positive impact on him.

Teamwork

Hazel takes on board the information professionals tell her and deals with Ben's behaviour as best she can. She has no interest in taking part in behaviour management workshops. Ben is Ben, and they know what works to help him calm down at home. Ben doesn't like to talk about how he is feeling but sometimes he will with Hazel.

Hazel and her children have been through so much but having each other is what has helped them to move on from it. Hazel knows she has three crazy boys, but as a four they are a like a little team, and everyone has their role in that team.

Hazel isn't interested in getting into disputes with Fred about who should be picking up or dropping off the children, so she will take them and pick them up when he asks her to. Other people tell her she is being too soft, but Hazel doesn't see the problem with it. Her priorities are keeping her children safe, and after everything they have had to deal with, making it as easy and stress-free as possible for them to see their father.

A Good Move

Ben moving to the alternative provision has been a massive change for the whole family, but a really positive change. Things have been a lot better for Ben. The smaller classroom sizes work really well for him, he is much less anxious and his confidence has grown.

Before, when Hazel wasn't able to work, the family were struggling both emotionally and financially. Now they have a routine which works for everyone.

Hazel dreads to think where they would be if it weren't for the alternative provision. Luckily, they got there in the end.

Looking Ahead to Secondary School

The next step for Ben will be moving to secondary school. The thought of this makes Hazel feel a bit nervous because there is so much uncertainty around the type of provision he will be able to go to.

Ben doesn't have an EHCP, but an application has been made. Hazel would love to say that Ben could manage spending eight hours a day in a class of thirty, but she worries that they could end up in the same situation they were in in primary school.

Hazel can't imagine that a mainstream school would tolerate Ben's behaviour. Without that side to him, Hazel thinks he could manage, but unfortunately it is a part of who he is. Ben is funny and has a great sense of humour, yet Hazel knows Ben can be a handful sometimes too. He likes everything in order and for everyone to follow the rules, even if he doesn't always follow them himself!

Ben is ready for secondary school and has told Hazel he won't carry on behaving like he has done when he gets there. Hazel just hopes they can find a school that is better able to meet Ben's needs than his primary schools ever were.

Hazel doesn't want Ben attending a special unit in a mainstream school. She knows what children can be like and doesn't want Ben to be singled out from everyone else; she doesn't want him to feel different.

Revisiting the Past

Revisiting her past, particularly with regards to her relationship with Fred, is something Hazel really hates to do, because she has had to go over it so many times. She doesn't want it hanging over her anymore. Yet, at the same time, it's part of everyone's life, so every now and again, she knows it must be unpacked from the box its kept in and talked about. Hazel feels that unfortunately, there are parts of Ben's story which wouldn't make sense without it.

4.2.5 Laura's Story

Early Development

Laura remembers Dennis was so lovable as a baby. He was a bit of a cheeky monkey but not naughty. Dennis started to walk early on, and Laura remembers that as soon as he stopped wearing nappies he was always on the go. From about nine months old, Dennis was always climbing things. He'd be on the windowsill or the tv units, or dancing around the room. Dennis also liked to destroy things; he would climb inside the cabinets and unscrew them all so they fell off. Yet, from quite early on, Laura knew that there was something different about Dennis.

Nursery

Dennis started nursery absolutely perfectly. He went with his best friend and they idolised each other. For the first year everything was fine, but in the second year, Dennis's key worker left.

Dennis's behaviour started to deteriorate, and at first, Laura didn't really think anything of it. Dennis had always been head strong so it didn't concern her to begin with. However, over time, Dennis's behaviours escalated and the nursery asked if they could put Dennis forward for some assessments. They suspected he had Autism and Laura was happy for it to be investigated since she had always known there was something there, she just didn't know what it was.

Dennis wasn't interested in doing anything that involved putting pen to paper. He would never sit and do colouring or painting, whether that was at home or nursery; he would rather throw it or run away to do something else.

Laura started to think that Dennis was clashing with his new key worker, and she realised that all of Dennis's behaviours had begun when she started working at the nursery.

All Laura could do was apologise because she didn't know what to do; Dennis never showed any of the same behaviours at home. Dennis's key worker visited Laura to reassure her that everything was okay and the nursery persevered trying lots of different strategies.

However, nothing seemed to change. Things got progressively worse and the staff were having to restrain Dennis. Laura wanted to try sending Dennis to a new setting, but the nursery didn't want to give up on him. They gave it one last go, but unfortunately, the staff were unable to manage the severity of Dennis's behaviour and decided to exclude him.

Starting School

When it came to Dennis starting school, Laura approached them first to tell them that he had been excluded from nursery. The school didn't seem deterred by this and Dennis got on really well with the staff who carried out the home visit. Dennis started school and was coming back every day saying how much he loved it. However, Laura couldn't

help but worry. There didn't seem to be an obvious trigger for Dennis's behaviours, and he was so different at home that there was no way of knowing if it might escalate again.

Dennis continued to refuse to do reading or anything like that. His argument was that he knew it, so why did he have to show you? School stayed positive and thought that he would be fine. They could see that Dennis was a bit of a monkey, but that was all it was at the time.

Laura's Health

A few months after Dennis started school, Laura was taken into hospital unexpectedly. It was discovered that she has arthritis, and soon Dennis began to worry about her. Dennis became hyper-vigilant to any noises Laura made which might have indicated she was in pain and he started wanting to know where she was going to be before he went to school.

After a while, Dennis didn't want to go to school, he wanted to stay at home with Laura instead.

Signs for Help Were Misunderstood

Laura seemed to be the only one who thought that the changes to her health could have a significant impact on Dennis. None of the professionals' reports, even the educational psychologist, understood Laura's rationale.

One thing that really stuck with Laura was being told by a professional that Dennis was manipulating her. She didn't believe this was true and it was hurtful to hear when she could see how worried and anxious Dennis was.

At school, Dennis's behaviour became progressively worse. Laura found out that Dennis had been throwing his lunch in the air and hiding under the table with his hands over his ears for three months. It was things like this where the teachers were only noticing the behaviour and couldn't see that that they were cries for help.

Lots of noise has always been an issue for Dennis and things like birthday parties get too much for him. On the first day of school, Dennis said to Laura that he found the playground too noisy and there were too many people. Laura would have instantly been

able to tell the school why Dennis was acting the way he was in the lunch hall if they had just told her about it sooner.

Laura remembers that Dennis didn't like being left at a table with other children in the classroom and he would lash out at the teacher until they came back to him. Laura tried to tell them that walking away from Dennis was a trigger for his behaviour, but they didn't see it at first. In the same way, when the teacher's chased Dennis around school, they didn't realise that he couldn't cope with all of them talking at him as soon as they caught him. It was always the same things causing Dennis's behaviour and Laura felt like they were just going around in a vicious cycle.

The school didn't realise that Dennis talks to Laura about everything, so she understood what things were like from his perspective. It was so frustrating that she could see what was happening when everyone else couldn't.

Staff's Lack of Knowledge and Training in SEN

At first, Laura thought the school were amazing and could cope with Dennis. Yet, if the right systems had been in place, things wouldn't have happened the way they did. Their approach with Dennis didn't work. They were getting him to read when they knew that would cause a problem, and as Dennis's behaviours escalated, the teachers weren't noticing how their own behaviour was affecting him. Laura remembers the school councillor telling her about a time when the teachers had been chasing Dennis around the school. When they stopped, Dennis calmed down, but they carried on talking at him, which wound him up again. They didn't catch what they were doing.

Laura believes that the school wasn't equipped to deal with Dennis's behaviour. Everyone, including the board of governors and the exclusions team were looking at Dennis's behaviour, but they weren't able to see what was going on underneath it. They hadn't had the right training to know what to look for.

Laura feels that this is a problem across mainstream schools; that staff don't know enough about SEN. She has respect for teachers and the job that they do, but they are not educated enough with regards to what works and what doesn't work. She wonders if this is due to the education system not providing clear enough guidelines on SEN, or whether schools just need more staff who are SENCO trained, including in early years settings.

Laura believes that fully understanding SEN should be a responsibility for all schools. She feels strongly that the current education system is failing children who have SEN, and it has severely failed her son.

Trying to Understand Where it All Comes From

Laura has been trying to understand why Dennis's behaviours all started since he was in Nursery. When Dennis experiences emotion, it can almost come over him in an explosion of excitement and he just goes crazy. Dennis has explained it to Laura. He says that his head is like your hands interlocked, and if you squeeze really hard until the pressure gets too much, that's what it's like in his head and it goes 'Boom!'. He doesn't know what to do, so he just does everything at once.

Laura wonders if events which happened in the past have triggered something in Dennis to react to things the way he does. She likens it to someone having anger issues and knowing that having a drink is likely to trigger them.

A little while after Dennis started school, Dennis told Laura about something that a member of nursery staff used to do to restrain him when she thought he was being naughty. Laura is certain that this might have something to do with where it all started, but she isn't sure how exactly.

Laura has also explored other avenues to try and understand Dennis's behaviour, but these haven't really helped to give her any answers. Laura has been told that Dennis doesn't present as Autistic, yet she can't help the feeling that something still isn't quite right. Laura is certain that Dennis has separation anxiety and she could see that he was constantly checking to see that she was there during the ASD assessment.

Other professionals have expressed to Laura that they feel Dennis has ADHD, which Laura has similarly considered because of Dennis's behaviours and the way he reacts to certain situations.

Dennis has been referred to the ASD team three times and the only outcome has been signing Laura up to the Incredible Years Programme. Although Laura is open minded to learning new things, she doesn't believe taking part in the programme will help Dennis in the right way.

Changes

Before Dennis's permanent exclusion, he went through numerous tutors and two changes to his timetable. They began when the other children started feeling scared of him, and the decision was made to reduce Dennis's timetable to half days. However, Laura was finding that within an hour she was being asked to collect him from school.

Dennis was given a one to one tutor who worked with him in class. Dennis got on really well with her and she would do all sorts of sensory things with him which he enjoyed. Unfortunately, she left and none of the various tutors Dennis went on to have were quite like her.

Laura remembers that Dennis was supported by an individual from the educational psychology service who he really liked, but he quickly outsmarted her. After a while, Dennis was down to one hour a day in school. This time was for socialising and each day a different child would work with him.

Dennis received two fixed term exclusions and it got to the point where Laura felt there were too many people involved with Dennis. He didn't want to see them all, so for a while he was only being supported by the person from the educational psychology service.

The school used an agency to find tutors for Dennis and they kept changing them, with each one being totally different to the next. One of them was like Miss Trunchball; Dennis didn't like her at all!

The school tried getting a male tutor for Dennis instead, and they told Laura they were going to give him training on SEN. Dennis loved working with this tutor at first. For a few days he would come home from school excited about the things they had been doing together, like playing football and other games. Then they started trying to get Dennis to read or do other bits of work. It would be fun, fun…book, so naturally this caused a problem. Laura tried to remind Dennis that if he just read his book, he would then be able to go and play. Dennis was reluctant to, but he did start to read a little.

The Permanent Exclusion

It was reading which eventually lead to Dennis's permanent exclusion. Laura remembers that she first found out about it when Dennis came home from school one

day and told her what had happened; the school didn't call her. Dennis had read the book the teachers had asked him to read, but then when they tried to make him read another, Dennis had run off. Laura found out that the teachers had then chased and cornered Dennis, which lead him to kick a member of staff.

The school refused to meet with Laura following the exclusion. A meeting had been planned to discuss an EHCP, and, despite the date falling during the time that Dennis remained on role with the school, Laura was told it would not be going ahead.

Whilst Dennis was out of school, Laura wanted to be able to teach him at home so that he wouldn't be missing out on any learning. Rather than being given information or resources on the curriculum that Dennis's year group would be learning, frustratingly, Laura was instead told to Google it by an exclusion officer.

Dennis had a tutor during the two months he was out of school. Every time they got a book or a piece of paper out, Dennis would run away. The tutor asked Laura what she thought would help to engage Dennis. She told them to talk to Dennis and find out what he wanted to do. Eventually, Dennis and the tutor got on really well and they did lots of outdoor and physical activities which Dennis loved. They even managed to get Dennis to find a few words in a word search before Dennis started the alternative provision in September.

Not Knowing What To Do

Throughout everything, there were many times where Laura just didn't know what to do. As a first-time mother, Laura found it hard to understand the education system. She remembers that when it came to nominating Dennis's schools for the first time, she had no idea that there was an online system for it until her friend told her. Laura hadn't known about it because Dennis had been excluded from nursery, but it felt like, well, am I just meant to know this?

When Dennis was in school, Laura remembers feeling embarrassed and ashamed about what was happening. She didn't know what to do. Even after Dennis was permanently excluded, there was a period where Laura didn't know where he was going to be educated and had no idea what she needed to be doing.

It wasn't until about one week before Dennis was permanently excluded that someone from school, the school counsellor, actually asked Laura how she was feeling. Laura

burst into tears. She didn't know how she felt or what questions she was meant to be asking. The school counsellor told Laura she was doing everything that she could, and she was doing everything right. Yet, day upon day Laura was called in to the school and no matter how much she apologised, it felt like it was never good enough for them. She felt like she was at breaking point and the last thing she needed was to feel judged by the staff. Talking about it still upsets Laura because she feels so bad for Dennis.

Alternative Provision and Their Support

At first, Laura refused Dennis starting at the alternative provision. She was worried about the journey and could imagine how anxious Dennis could feel travelling so far without her. However, Laura was willing to go over to see it and on their arrival they met Miss Bozart. Instantly she built rapport with Dennis and from that moment Laura knew he would be ok there.

Dennis loved it there. On his first day, he went home and said to Laura, 'Mum, they're just like me!' Dennis had always been told he was naughty so he must have finally felt normal. Dennis was calmer at the alternative provision and settled in well. The teachers were getting some writing out of him and he was following the rules.

Unfortunately, an incident with another child lead to Dennis being hospitalised. After that, Laura remembers how Dennis's guard went up. He became defensive and he felt the need to become top dog to protect himself. Dennis continued to conform to the rules of the provision, but Laura felt that he had shown his true colours.

Laura feels Dennis is much more settled now that he has Miss Bozart back as his class teacher. He seems to be comforted by Miss Bozart and Laura can't praise her enough for all the help and support she has provided Dennis.

Laura is pleased the staff are now starting to recognise the signs Dennis displays when he needs support. Without the alternative provision, she doesn't know where she would be.

Seeing the Person Underneath the Behaviour

Laura admits that her son is far from being an angel, but she sees the person underneath his behaviour and believes Dennis doesn't mean to do the things he does.

Dennis isn't able to read and write yet, but he is so intelligent. He knows about all sorts of things, like animals and wildlife, but he just doesn't like to show it and doesn't see why he should have to.

Laura loves so much about Dennis. He is charming, happy, quick witted and so funny. Everyone loves him at the alternative provision and they used to at his old school too. Laura's father passed away just before she gave birth to Dennis, and for Laura its incredible how much Dennis is like him. It saddens her to think that Dennis will never get to meet his grandad, because he was such a huge part of Laura's life.

Friendships

Dennis has always struggled with friendships. Dennis is tall for his age and he used to tower over the other children in his previous school. Laura feels this may be partly why they became frightened of him. However, the teacher's always told Laura how much the other children missed Dennis when he wasn't there. Laura believes it was never that the other children had a problem with Dennis, it was that Dennis didn't know how to maintain friendships.

Dennis had never hurt a child at school, except for the day he was permanently excluded. Dennis was annoyed and bumped into a child who had been calling him names for a long time. Laura thinks that this was just Dennis being annoying but being himself. He didn't see why he couldn't bump into a boy who had been calling him names for six months.

Dennis still struggles to be in a group now. He has also had some issues with the other boys at the alternative provision in the past and this has impacted his behaviour. Laura feels that had Dennis been able to socialise during the hour a day he was in school, rather than them trying to slip books in, he may have been able to develop some of the social skills he needed.

Dennis would rather spend time with Laura than do anything else and he has the mentality of an older child. He finds younger children annoying and too loud because they scream. Laura has always spoken to Dennis like she would if he was anybody else. It is important to Laura that Dennis knows how to speak properly, and hates it when adults talk to children like babies.

One of Laura's best friends once said that it was Laura's fault Dennis struggles to make friends, because she didn't take him to play groups. Laura agrees with her friend to some extent, but it was hurtful for Laura to hear because it was the first time someone had placed the blame on her. Dennis went to nursery, so he had been around other children; Laura has just never been the sort of person who would have an interest in attending groups with other mums.

Dennis doesn't get to see his best friend very often and Laura thinks he has become obsessed with another child who he has developed a friendship with. Dennis worries that he will lose his friend so will defend him if he has done something wrong, rather than tell an adult. Laura feels he has a much better friendship with an older child and is a completely different person when they are together; they just laugh and talk together. For Laura this is what friendship is and exactly what Dennis needs.

Trying to Get Help

Laura has been trying to get help for her and Dennis for a long time. Before he was permanently excluded, Laura was told that there wasn't enough funding for Dennis to get more support in school. The school refused Laura's suggestions that Dennis could try using a laptop or an iPad to write on. When he was only in school for an hour a day, they were supposed to provide books for Dennis to work from. Despite asking for them several times, the school did not send any home and Laura ended up having to buy them for Dennis herself.

Laura begged for help when Dennis was going through everything because she didn't know what to do. Early Help became involved to support the family, but no concerns were raised about life at home.

It didn't seem like professionals knew what each other's roles were either. Laura was asked by one of the exclusions officers to apply for an EHCP through Early Help, but after eight months Laura found out that Early Help don't help with these. Laura feels that this time was wasted, and the exclusions officer should have known the correct person to direct them to.

Laura's case was kept open by Early Help for a while because their case worker knew that Laura needed help with regards to Dennis's situation at school. However, after their

caseworker went off sick, she was left without any contact for a while and after several attempts to speak to someone, she was informed that their case had been closed.

To Laura it seemed like, because there was nothing going on at home, Early Help didn't see there were any problems. With their case closed, Laura has no idea what she is meant to do now. Currently, she still feels like they are in a catch twenty-two situation and will have to rely on the alternative provision to know what to do next.

Excelling and The Future

Last year, they discussed trying to transition Dennis back into mainstream school, but neither Laura nor the exclusion officer felt that he was ready. Laura doesn't feel that Dennis will be able to cope in mainstream school if he doesn't cope well in a class with only six other children.

Dennis wants to go to a mainstream school so that he can play with the other children, but he has told Laura he won't go in the dinner hall or a big classroom. Laura feels that although he likes the thought of mainstream school, Dennis knows he won't be able to cope being there.

Now, Dennis is learning so much and although it is under protest, he is doing his work. After everything, Dennis is finally excelling.

4.2.6 Lisa and Natalie's Story

Pre-school and Preparation

Natalie spent time getting to know Billy and his family long before he started school. Billy's mum got in contact and explained that he had been excluded from preschool. She didn't feel that the preschool had understood Billy and he hadn't settled particularly well there.

Natalie wanted to understand Billy's needs as much as possible before he joined them, so she visited the preschool to hear their side of the story.

The staff at the preschool said what a lovely boy Billy was, but they were concerned about him because of the incidences he had been involved in. Natalie remembers them describing how Billy had been aggressive towards other children on a number of

occasions, and after a while this had become too much for the adults to manage. Compared to other early years settings Natalie has visited, she wondered if Billy's preschool just didn't have the resources available to provide him with the right support, and this might have explained how certain events escalated as they did.

Billy's home was a little chaotic when Natalie first visited, but Billy's mum spoke openly with Natalie and together they discussed things that would help Billy to settle when he started school.

These visits helped Natalie and other staff to feel prepared for Billy's arrival to the school, knowing that he was going to find school tricky and that he would need some extra support to begin with.

Positive Beginning

Despite the pre-conceptions that Natalie and Lisa had had about Billy and what the start of school might have been like, September was really positive. Natalie shared her role as class teacher with another member of staff, and to them, Billy was no different to the other children in Reception. Billy settled well and like all the other children, he had started school full time by the third week.

They couldn't help but wonder whether Billy being that little bit older and settled into a new routine had made all the difference.

Noticing Changes in Behaviour

It was October when they started noticing changes in Billy's behaviour, but even then, it was all manageable.

As all children can do when they are first settling into school, Billy was beginning to push the boundaries. He wasn't following instructions like the other children were and the class teacher started to have some difficulties with him.

They knew that Billy needed a bit more support to help him through changes in routine, and they expected the term between October and Christmas to be challenging for him; as it would be for many of the children.

However, despite the additional support, Billy was bubbling and as time went on, he began to push the boundaries further and further.

Significant Turning Point

The most dramatic changes occurred after Christmas. A new teacher joined the school and she became Billy's class teacher alongside Natalie. She was phenomenal and nurturing, but quite petite.

However, soon after the start of term, Billy's behaviour became more and more aggressive. He'd been struggling academically and Natalie remembers he had just started to write his name. Like many other children, Billy would say 'No' to things, but the usual strategies to support with this didn't seem to help. The only thing they can think of that had changed at that time was the new class teacher starting.

Eventually, Billy's behaviour escalated to the extent that he was pushing adults away, being verbally abusive and throwing objects.

Escalation of Behaviour

In February, Billy's behaviour really started to escalate. The smallest of requests such as writing his name could trigger behaviours which were frightening for staff and the other children.

For a child in Reception, Billy was particularly strong, so he was able to pick up objects that you wouldn't ordinarily expect for a child his age. Natalie and Lisa remember times when Billy picked up wooden bricks in the playground and an occasion where he threw a table.

It was the unpredictability of it all which made Billy's behaviour so frightening, but they tried not show him they were afraid. They knew Billy was trying to communicate something, but they just couldn't understand what it was.

Specialist Support and Guidance

Lisa and Natalie sought advice from as many professionals as they could in their efforts to support Billy.

After Christmas, the team of adults around Billy was fantastic; the kind of support you would want for any child and throughout it all Natalie had remained consistent. Yet as Billy's behaviour escalated, Natalie and Lisa felt that a different, more specialist approach was needed.

Billy was on his own individual timetable and had had 1:1 support for a while, as advised by an educational psychologist.

They approached an SEN supply agency for behavioural specialists and employed a 1:1 teaching assistant to work with Billy at considerable, yet necessary expense to the school. She had a breadth of experience and was brilliant with Billy. She wasn't scared of him like others were, even when she got punched in the kidneys.

Billy continued to display very challenging behaviours. He would trash the classroom, where every object would be thrown, and there were times when he had to be restrained because he was out of control.

Despite all the support they were providing, it felt as though they weren't getting anywhere. The day was just too much for Billy and they made the decision to reduce his timetable to one hour a day.

For a little while there were small signs that progress was being made. Sadly, Billy's teaching assistant left and although two further teaching assistants were provided for the school, neither chose to continue working with Billy because of his behaviour and both left within a week.

Once again, Natalie and Lisa sought to try something new and they employed a male teaching assistant. He was tall and built like a rugby player. He worked brilliantly with Billy, doing more physical activities which Billy enjoyed.

Natalie and Lisa felt very aware of the fact that their job was to educate Billy, and whilst having a male member of staff seemed to help a little, Billy wasn't learning. After all the support and guidance they had asked for, and the various interventions they had put in place, there was nothing more they could have done.

Trying to Understand

Natalie wishes she could have understood Billy more. At first, they wondered if parenting was the reason for Billy's behaviour. However, as time went on, the more they realised it was bigger than that.

Writing seemed to be a particular trigger for Billy, even writing one word, and the adults working with him felt like they had to brace themselves every time they asked him to

do anything academic. It was as if he didn't want to learn until he knew what to do and then he'd just want to move onto something else.

Sometimes they wondered if Billy was just behaving as he did for attention, or because they were stopping him doing something he wanted to do. In the end they could see that he couldn't control it. They could see that Billy was battling some demons somewhere and maybe he had been since preschool.

Keeping Everyone Safe

Billy started to become obsessive over the other children and particular resources. He would never try to attack the other children, but he would crowd over them, stopping them from going anywhere when he wanted them to play with him.

Billy would rampage through school and it wouldn't matter who was in his way. The children were becoming so frightened of Billy because of the way he attacked staff that they didn't want to play with him anymore, but it was also increasingly scary for the adults.

There were several occasions where children had to be removed from the classroom for their safety. Natalie and Lisa were able to anticipate when things were escalating. They didn't want to risk other members of staff getting hurt so would put themselves in the firing line and intervene.

Sometimes, to stop Billy from running around the school, they had to lock the classroom door to make sure he was contained and safe in one place. However, Billy then felt trapped and he would resort to 'fight' mode. Natalie and Lisa had several bruises between them and by this stage it felt like nobody was safe.

Running Out of Options

Billy was becoming more and more physically aggressive towards the staff. They had objects thrown at them, they were stabbed with pencils, punched and kicked. It felt relentless.

Fixed term and internal exclusions were given on a number of occasions. It seemed like running around the school was a game to Billy, and he would run around so aggressively that parts of the doors would break off.

Natalie remembers one day where four adults were needed to contain him to the classroom because he was completely feral. Billy just wouldn't keep himself in the classroom anymore and co-operated with no one, whether that was his parents or the staff.

Mum and dad were called to the school a couple of times so that they could take Billy home, but dad would have to carry Billy as he hit and kicked all the way to the car. Billy was so strong that they worried someone would get hurt.

Incidences like this were happening so often and it was upsetting for everyone, including Billy. Natalie, Lisa and the other staff had tried so hard to help Billy with all the knowledge and experience they had, but it eventually got to the stage where they had run out of options.

The Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is never an easy decision to make. Natalie and Lisa would have done anything to have avoided going down that path for Billy, but they had kept going for as long as they possibly could.

Natalie can even remember what she was wearing and the activity the class were doing when it all happened on that last day. It was awful. Billy was asked to write a word and he just went wild. Natalie remembers the look on his dad's face when he collected Billy; he was like a broken man. They were both so sorry it had come to this point, but it was the final straw.

The school followed all the necessary protocol and Billy parents didn't appeal the decision.

Billy wasn't happy, and the time had come for school to say, 'We're not the right place, we're not meeting his needs'.

The Emotional Impact

Natalie and Lisa's school has a history of being inclusive, so to have had to permanently exclude Billy is incredibly upsetting for them. They want every child who walks through their door to experience happiness and success, because all children deserve an education. In some ways, permanently excluding Billy felt like they had failed. For Natalie and Lisa it was almost a question of 'What did we do wrong?'

For Lisa, one of the saddest things about it was that Billy was so young, only just starting his educational career. It isn't something you expect to happen for a child in Reception.

Natalie finds it particularly hard to talk about the day of the exclusion because she was the one in the classroom. She felt so useless, not being able to help and knowing that nothing she did would make a difference. On the other hand, she felt relieved it was her, as it may have been even harder if the other class teacher had had to go through it all.

Natalie sobbed on the day of the permanent exclusion and was upset for several days afterwards. In some ways, she still feels incredibly guilty that they weren't able to do anything more to help Billy.

The permanent exclusion brought with it some very mixed feelings too. Everything leading up to the exclusion had been exhausting for the staff. They were constantly trying new things to engage Billy. It was so draining for everyone in the school that there was almost a feeling of wanting it to all be over. In the end, there was an overwhelming feeling of relief that everyone could get back to focusing on what they should have been doing, but there was also hope, knowing that Billy was going to get the support he needed.

Natalie and Lisa do everything they can to help all children in their school, and they don't give up on those who are struggling. Part of Natalie wonders if they gave up on Billy, but looking back, they couldn't have done anymore.

Nobody was Listening

Natalie and Lisa felt that Billy needed professional help some time before the permanent exclusion happened. They had tried expressing their concerns that they weren't able to meet his needs, but the county weren't listening to them.

Natalie and Lisa are experienced and have been doing their jobs for a long time. Having taught children like Billy in the past, it felt incredibly frustrating that they knew what he needed, yet because of lack of funding or people, nothing happened.

Sadly, Natalie wonders if the exclusion could have been avoided completely if they had been listened to earlier. At the time they felt that Billy would be able to stay in a

mainstream setting if he had the support to work through everything first. A managed move would have been a better solution for him, but people weren't listening to that either.

Unfortunately, making the decision to permanently exclude Billy was what it took for people to accept what the school had been saying for a while; that they weren't the right place for him.

Positive Ending

Six weeks after Billy had started attending the alternative provision, Natalie and Lisa saw his mum and were so pleased to hear that he had settled in really well.

Initially, there had been a battle with Billy's mum and dad about the provision. They were worried about how far away it was and had been adamant he wouldn't be going. However, once Billy's started there, his mum could see that although it was a big move, it was also the right move for him.

Natalie and Lisa can imagine how hard it must have been for Billy's mum and dad to hear that their four-year-old had been permanently excluded, but they feel that once they realised why the decision had to be made, they didn't hold any animosity towards the school. Lisa hopes that Billy's parents know they did everything they could to help their son.

The alternative provision was exactly what Billy needed in the end. Natalie remembers what a lovely boy he was and the kind, caring side he had to him. She would love to see Billy now, to give him a hug and tell him she's glad he is doing ok.

Billy and his parents deserve to be happy, and if Billy is happy, the lovely side of him will be shining through.

Reflecting on The Experience of Permanent Exclusion

Natalie and Lisa found looking back on the permanent exclusion to be a reflective experience. It helped them to think about their practice now, compared to what they did then and what could help other children they have in the school with similar needs to Billy.

Reflecting on their experience has also been emotional. Lisa knows how upset Natalie felt when it happened, so reliving it is harder for her. Despite some of the feelings it

might have brought back for Natalie, Lisa feels that she mustn't think she failed Billy, because he got what he needed in the end.

For Natalie, the whole experience is something that is still with her. She is an emotional person and she cares a lot about the children she works with. Billy was such a big part of who she was while he was at the school, and a child like that can never really be forgotten.

Lisa wonders if Billy was too young to know what was happening, however, permanent exclusion is not a pleasant experience for anyone. It is certainly not something which Natalie and Lisa would like to relive very often.

4.3 The Identification of Shared Storylines and Narrative Themes

In order to answer the central research question, 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?' in greater depth, participants' storied narratives were analysed according to their thematic stanzas, using the method outlined in Chapter Three.

The purpose of this phase was to identify the most salient, shared storylines across participants' narratives. Shared storylines, or 'Narrative themes' were identified, some of which also comprised corresponding 'Sub-themes'. Appendix T (page 218) illustrates how similar experiences or storylines identified in each stanza of participants' storied narratives were identified and colour coded.

'Sub-themes' consisted of experiences which shaped or contributed towards the overall 'Narrative theme' in some way. Whilst many 'Sub-themes' consisted of experiences which were common amongst participants, others were more pertinent to individual narratives. 'Sub-themes' therefore acknowledged the ways in which some of the shared storylines were also experienced very differently by participants. Tables 4.1 (page 57) and 4.2 (page 58) provide a summary of the 'Narrative Themes' and their associated 'Sub-themes' in the adults' (parents and teaching staff), and pupils' storied narratives respectively.

Table 4.1

Summary of narrative themes and sub-themes in adult storied narratives

Narrative Theme	Sub-theme
The Changes and Escalation in Behaviours Over Time	Positive Beginnings Containing the Behaviour Exclusions and Reduced Timetables
Significant Events and the Impact on the Child in School	Traumatic Life Events
Exploring Explanations for Behaviour	Something Different They Couldn't Understand Positive Attributes
Staff Were Unable to Manage the Behaviour	Lack of Funding and Resources
Support and Relationships	Regular Changes Friendships
The Emotional Journey	Negative Feelings Lack of Agency
The Permanent Exclusion	The Build Up
The Wider Impact on The Family	
Lack of Support and Guidance	Emotional Support Support and SEN
Alternative Provision Support	
Hopes and Worries About the Future	Stigma of SEN
Reflecting on the Past	

Table 4.2

Summary of narrative themes and sub-themes in pupils' storied narratives.

Narrative Theme	Sub-theme
Beginnings	Things Got Worse
Primary School Environment	
Trapped	
The Safety of Home	
Relationships	Meaningful Relationships Unhelpful Relationships
The Alternative Provision	
The Future	
The Portrayal of Self	

The following sections will now discuss the 'Narrative themes' and 'Sub-themes' in further detail using excerpts from participants' storied narratives. The decision was taken to group parents and school staff under the term 'adults' since many of the narrative themes to be discussed were common across their stories. Therefore, organising the findings in this way was also the clearest way to present the findings to the reader. The 'Narrative themes' and 'Sub-themes' identified in the adults' storied narratives will first be presented, followed by those in the pupils' narratives.

4.4 Adults' Storied Narratives: Narrative Themes and Subthemes

4.5 Narrative Theme: The Changes and Escalation in Behaviours Over Time

The child's behaviour was a prominent storyline in all the adults' narratives, and in most cases, this included observing an escalation in the severity and regularity of the behaviours. Physically aggressive behaviours, including hitting or throwing objects, in addition to the child running or being chased were common themes.

Some participants described noticing smaller changes, or a progression of behaviours over time. This was the case for Natalie and Lisa, who felt that, to begin with, Billy's behaviours were manageable and not unexpected for a child his age:

"It was October when they started noticing changes in Billy's behaviour, but even then, it was all manageable. As all children can do when they are first settling into school, Billy was beginning to push the boundaries…However, despite the additional support, Billy was bubbling and as time went on, he began to push the boundaries further and further." (page 86)

However, for others such as Jennifer, the changes that occurred were far more sudden, or the behaviours had been consistently challenging from the beginning:

"There were issues from the word go when Jack started school full time. Reception wasn't too bad but Year 1 was particularly challenging for Jack and this soon became evident in his behaviours." (page 60)

The use of language which portrayed the child as being out of control, such as 'crazy', 'rampage' and 'out of control' were common descriptors, particularly during the build up to, or on the day the permanent exclusion happened. In two of the narratives, this was associated with staff and pupils becoming increasingly afraid of the child. For example, in Natalie and Lisa's narrative:

"Billy would rampage through school and it wouldn't matter who was in his way. The children were becoming so frightened of Billy because of the way he attacked staff that they didn't want to play with him anymore, but it was also increasingly scary for the adults." (page 89)

4.5.1 Subtheme: Positive Beginnings

Despite challenging behaviours being prominent in the adults' narratives, positive beginnings at the very start of the child's educational journey, such as nursery or the transition to school, were also common experiences. For Jennifer and Laura, this was only for a brief period of time before the situation started to deteriorate.

Some of the adults' narratives also illustrated how these positive beginnings were coupled with a sense of anticipation, either in relation to an expectation that the child's behaviours would soon escalate, or an anticipation that the child's behaviours were going to be worse than they were. Laura, Natalie and Lisa's narratives illustrate examples of these experiences:

"...However, Laura couldn't help but worry. There didn't seem to be an obvious trigger for Dennis's behaviours, and he was so different at home that there was no way of knowing if it might escalate again." (Laura, pages 76-77)

"Despite the pre-conceptions that Natalie and Lisa had had about Billy and what the start of school might have been like, September was really positive. Natalie shared her role as class teacher with another member of staff, and to them, Billy was no different to the other children in Reception." (Natalie and Lisa, page 86)

4.5.2 Subtheme: Containing the Behaviour

As the child's behaviour escalated in the adults' narratives, the way in which staff managed the behaviour similarly escalated to include containment and restraining. Each of the narratives illustrate that these methods were used by staff at various times, and in some cases regularly, to manage the child's behaviour.

In two of the four narratives, there was a sense that keeping everyone safe, including the child, was a priority. In order to do so, the child was contained in some way, either by removing other children from the classroom, or confining a child to a particular area in school.

"Hazel recalls the teachers having to remove the other children from the classroom because Ben had gone crackers" (Hazel, page 70)

"There were several occasions where children had to be removed from the classroom for their safety...They didn't want to risk other members of staff getting hurt so would put themselves in the firing line and intervene." (Natalie and Lisa, page 89)

Natalie, Lisa and Laura's narratives further illustrated a sense that the child was trapped or felt trapped by being contained in one space, which then led to the child reacting in a physically aggressive way:

"Sometimes, to stop Billy from running around the school, they had to lock the classroom door to make sure he was contained and safe in one place. However, Billy then felt trapped and he would resort to 'fight' mode." (Natalie and Lisa, page 89)

In Laura's narrative, this led to Dennis being permanently excluded:

"Laura found out that the teachers had then chased and cornered Dennis, which led him to kick a member of staff." (page 81)

4.5.3 Subtheme: Exclusions and Reduced Timetables

In all the adults' narratives, fixed term and internal exclusions were common, with the child receiving several fixed term exclusions prior to their permanent exclusion from primary school.

Similarly, the majority of participants described the child's timetable being gradually reduced down to one or two hours a day.

"The day was just too much for Billy and they made the decision to reduce his timetable to one hour a day" (Natalie and Lisa page 88)

Whilst Jennifer did not describe Jack having a reduced timetable officially, she did regularly experience times when the school advised her to take Jack home early:

"Regularly Jennifer was told that it would be best to take Jack home because he wasn't in the right frame of mind to learn." (page 61)

4.6 Narrative Theme: Significant Events and the Impact on the Child in School

In all the adults' narratives, the participants described significant events which they associated with changes in the child's behaviour in school. These included changes in staff (Jennifer, Natalie, Lisa and Laura), separation (Hazel) and changes related to health (Laura). The adults considered these events to be a potential trigger for an escalation in the child's behaviour. For example, Hazel saw a clear relationship between her separation from Fred and the deterioration in Ben's behaviour in Year 3:

"When Hazel thinks back to the point at which Ben's behaviour changed, it was probably around the same time that her and Fred separated for the last time…Ben just couldn't behave; he was running off, rolling about or trashing the classroom, and the way he reacted to things changed. It felt like there was just a total breakdown." (Hazel, page 70)

Similarly, Jennifer felt that Jack's behaviour was related to the changes in staff that occurred in nursery:

"Within his first year of starting there, all the staff changed over the six-week summer holiday so when Jack went back in September everybody was new. This really unsettled Jack and he no longer wanted to go, so he started at a different preschool which was joined to the local school." (page 59)

Natalie and Lisa felt more uncertain about the impact the change in class teacher had on Billy, yet it was the only reason they could think of which would explain such a change in his behaviour:

"The most dramatic changes occurred after Christmas. A new teacher joined the school and she became Billy's class teacher alongside Natalie…Billy's behaviour became more and more aggressive…The only thing they can think of that had changed at that time was the new class teacher starting." (page 87)

4.6.1 Subtheme: Traumatic Life Events

Two of the participants, Laura and Hazel, experienced traumatic events in their lives. Hazel's narrative illustrates how her experience of domestic abuse, which connects several parts of her story, has influenced the way in which she makes sense of Ben's behaviours:

> *"Hazel recognises that the events Ben witnessed at home are a part of his story…Hazel has been told by various people that some of the reasons why Ben is how he is are because of trauma related or learnt behaviours. She remembers the kinds of things Ben would have witnessed at two years old and although she thinks he probably can't remember them now, she can't imagine they would have had a positive impact on him." (Hazel, page 73)*

Hazel's narrative is also characterised by conflicting feelings regarding when and how she will tell her children about the past.

> *"…Hazel worries about the affect this could have on them, especially when they are still so young. Hazel doesn't feel ready to tell her children yet, but she knows there will come a time when it will need to be said, and she will need to find the right way to say it." (page 69)*

In Laura's narrative, she relates Dennis's attributes to her father and there is a sense that his passing has influenced the close bond she has with Dennis.

> *"Laura loves so much about Dennis. He is charming, happy, quick witted and so funny…Laura's father passed away just before she gave birth to Dennis, and for Laura it's incredible how much Dennis is like him. It saddens her to think that Dennis will never get to meet his grandad, because he was such a huge part of Laura's life." (page 83)*

4.7 Narrative Theme: Exploring Explanations for Behaviour

In all the adults' narratives, the reasons for a child's behaviour were explored, some to a greater extent than others. This included the adults' own hypotheses and thoughts about the child's behaviour, as well as views of others such as professionals. Amongst these were ideas about the impact of past events, medical diagnoses and whether the child's behaviours were felt to be deliberate or not.

4.7.1 Subtheme: Something Different They Couldn't Understand

Writing and academic work were identified as triggers for a child's behaviour in four of the narratives. However, all five were also connected by a sense that there was something else within the child, underlying their behaviours, which made them different.

For Hazel, she accepted that this 'side' to Ben is part of who he is:

"Hazel can't imagine that a mainstream school would tolerate Ben's behaviour. Without that side to him, Hazel thinks he could manage, but unfortunately it is a part of who he is." (page 75)

However, in several of the narratives, the adults expressed being unable to understand what this 'something different' was. For Jennifer and Laura, they first experienced this when their children were of a young age:

"Looking back, Jennifer realised that from the age of three Jack's behaviours weren't the normal temper tantrums children display." (Jennifer, page 60)

"From about nine months old, Dennis was always climbing things. He'd be on the windowsill or the tv units, or dancing around the room. Dennis also liked to destroy things…from quite early on, Laura knew that there was something different about Dennis." (Laura, page 75)

Natalie and Lisa's narrative illustrates how, as Billy's behaviour escalated, it became harder for them to understand it and their explanation for it changed:

"Natalie wishes she could have understood Billy more. At first, they wondered if parenting was the reason for Billy's behaviour. However, as time went on, the more they realised it was bigger than that… Sometimes they wondered if Billy was just behaving as he did for attention, or because they were stopping him doing something he wanted to do. In the end they could see that he couldn't control it. They could see that Billy was battling some demons somewhere and maybe he had been since preschool." (pages 88-89)

Medical diagnoses were viewed differently by parents where this was a feature in their narratives. For Laura, a medical diagnosis is something she feels could help her understand why it is that Dennis is different:

"Laura has also explored other avenues to try and understand Dennis's behaviour, but these haven't really helped to give her any answers. Laura has been told that Dennis doesn't present as Autistic, yet she can't help the feeling that something still isn't quite right…Other professionals have expressed to Laura that they feel Dennis has ADHD, which Laura has similarly considered because of Dennis's behaviours…" (page 79)

On the other hand, for Hazel, Ben receiving diagnoses of Attention, Deficit, Hyperactivity, Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) did not change who Ben was or how she supported him at home:

"After Ben was diagnosed, Hazel was offered all sorts of help. Her response to this was, 'Well I didn't need it yesterday, so I don't need it today!' To Hazel, it doesn't matter what letters of the alphabet they put next to his name, Ben is still the same, he's just Ben." (page 71)

4.7.2 Subtheme: Positive Attributes

Conversely, whilst the narratives were characterised by the children's more challenging behaviours, they were also contrasted with the positive attributes and unique personalities of the children which made them likeable:

"Natalie remembers what a lovely boy he was and the kind, caring side he had to him"
(Natalie and Lisa, page 92)

"Laura admits that her son is far from being an angel, but she sees the person underneath his behaviour and believes Dennis doesn't mean to do the things he does. Dennis isn't able to read and write yet, but he is so intelligent. He knows about all sorts of things…Laura loves so much about Dennis…" (Laura, page 82)

"Jack is a clever boy and Jennifer wants his opportunities to be endless." (Jennifer, page 67)

"Ben is funny and has a great sense of humour, yet Hazel knows Ben can be a handful sometimes too. He likes everything in order and for everyone to follow the rules, even if he doesn't always follow them himself!" (Hazel, page 75)

4.8 Narrative Theme: Staff Were Unable to Manage the Behaviour

In all of the adults' narratives, a common narrative theme related to school staff being unable to manage the child's behaviour. This was most often related to a belief that the staff did not have the specialist knowledge required to support the child's needs.

Natalie and Lisa sought advice from a number of professionals in order to support Billy before approaching an agency for behavioural specialists:

"After Christmas, the team of adults around Billy was fantastic; the kind of support you would want for any child and throughout it all Natalie had remained consistent. Yet as Billy's behaviour escalated, Natalie and Lisa felt that a different, more specialist approach was needed." (page 87)

Jennifer and Laura's narratives illustrate their beliefs that staff were unable to support their children because there is a lack of training and knowledge of SEN in mainstream schools.

"Mainstream settings haven't been effective or supportive enough in allowing Jack to thrive. Continuity of care is something which Ofsted are always talking about, so Jennifer wonders why Jack wasn't offered that if it is a given standard?" (Jennifer, page 65)

"Everyone, including the board of governors and the exclusions team were looking at Dennis's behaviour, but they weren't able to see what was going on underneath it. They hadn't had the right training to know what to look for. Laura feels that this is a problem across mainstream schools; that staff don't know enough about SEN." (Laura, page 78)

Furthermore, they regard this to be a reflection of the education system as a whole:

"For a while, she and her husband considered home schooling Jack because it was clear that the education system didn't have the capacity or the knowledge to support children with needs like Jack's." (Jennifer, page 65)

"Laura believes that fully understanding SEN should be a responsibility for all schools. She feels strongly that the current education system is failing children who have SEN, and it has severely failed her son." (Laura, page 79)

4.8.1 Subtheme: Lack of Funding and Resources

In three of the adults' narratives, lack of funding and access to resources were barriers faced by the school, which impacted their ability to provide the child with the support they needed:

"Part of the problem was money; there was no funding so they weren't applying for extra support. Jennifer understands schools have processes and red tape to navigate, but it shouldn't take eight years to get some support for a child." (Jennifer, page 65)

"Having taught children like Billy in the past, it felt incredibly frustrating that they knew what he needed, yet because of lack of funding or people, nothing happened." (Natalie and Lisa, page 91)

Laura also experienced difficulties accessing resources from Dennis's school so that she could support him with his learning at home:

"Before he was permanently excluded, Laura was told that there wasn't enough funding for Dennis to get more support in school…When he was only in school for an hour a day, they were supposed to provide books for Dennis to work from. Despite asking for them several times, the school did not send any home and Laura ended up having to buy them for Dennis herself." (page 84)

4.9 Narrative Theme: Support and Relationships

The adults' narratives illustrate how the quality of relationships between teaching staff and the child influenced the type of support they received in school, and the extent to which this support was successful. This was particularly evident with regards to 1:1 adult support. For example, Jennifer described how staff used their knowledge of what would motivate Jack to try and engage him:

"Jack's teachers were very good and gave him rewards or put things in place that were just for him. Writing has always been an issue for Jack and Jennifer remembers that Jack would only write if he had a particular pencil his teachers had given him." (page 60)

Similarly, Laura explained how tutors were able to engage Dennis by incorporating his interests into activities:

"Eventually, Dennis and the tutor got on really well and they did lots of outdoor and physical activities which Dennis loved. They even managed to get Dennis to find a few words in a word search before Dennis started the alternative provision in September." (page 81)

4.9.1 Subtheme: Regular Changes

Regular changes to adults who worked with the child from both in, and outside of school, were a feature in Natalie, Lisa's and Laura's narratives. This illustrated how the child was frequently building new relationships with adults, some being more successful than others. The narratives also indicated that the reason for the 1:1 staff leaving was sometimes the child's behaviour. Those who worked with the child included individuals from the EPS, SEN supply agency staff and 1:1 teaching assistants from in school.

"Dennis was given a one to one tutor who worked with him in class. Dennis got on really well with her and she would do all sorts of sensory things with him which he enjoyed. Unfortunately, she left and none of the various tutors Dennis went on to have were quite like her… The school used an agency to find tutors for Dennis and they kept changing them, with each one being totally different to the next." (Laura, page 80)

"For a little while there were small signs that progress was being made. Sadly, Billy's teaching assistant left and although two further teaching assistants were provided for the school, neither chose to continue working with Billy because of his behaviour and both left within a week." (Natalie and Lisa, page 88)

4.9.2 Subtheme: Friendships

In Jennifer, Natalie and Lisa's narratives, the child was described to have difficulties in making and maintaining friendships which impacted their relationships with other children in school:

"Billy started to become obsessive over the other children and particular resources. He would never try to attack the other children, but he would crowd over them, stopping them from going anywhere when he wanted them to play with him." (Natalie and Lisa, page 89)

Laura reflected on the reasons why Dennis struggles to make friends, including how her own friendships may have affected him:

"Laura feels that had Dennis been able to socialise during the hour a day he was in school, rather than them trying to slip books in, he may have been able to develop some of the social skills he needed." (page 83)

"Dennis went to nursery, so he had been around other children; Laura has just never been the sort of person who would have an interest in attending groups with other mums." (page 84)

4.10 Narrative theme: The Emotional Journey

The adults' narratives illustrate how their experience of permanent exclusion was, and in some cases continues to be, a very emotional journey. The emotional turmoil they experienced was not limited to the event of the permanent exclusion itself. Rather, their narratives are characterised by a range of emotions at various points in times, including events leading up to and following the permanent exclusion.

4.10.1 Negative Feelings

The adults' narratives illustrate how the journey of permanent exclusion was generally a very negative experience, characterised by feelings including stress, exhaustion, struggle, embarrassment, shame, heartbreak, tension, sadness and relentlessness. In several of the narratives, permanent exclusion was described as something which the adults did not want to experience again.

"The whole experience was hell. Every day, Hazel would get a phone call at work asking her to pick Ben up from school." (Hazel, page 72)

Jennifer's experience put a strain on her mental health and prompted worries about the impact it may have had on Jack's wellbeing:

"The experience was stressful, tense and put a strain on Jennifer's mental health. As a parent, she also worries about the impact it has had on Jack's own wellbeing…The permanent exclusion wasn't an easy journey at all, and a journey which Jennifer doesn't ever want to experience again." (page 66)

Laura and Jennifer both described feeling blamed or judged for their child's behaviour by other people:

"Yet, day upon day Laura was called in to the school and no matter how much she apologised, it felt like it was never good enough for them. She felt like she was at breaking point and the last thing she needed was to feel judged by the staff. Talking about it still upsets Laura because she feels so bad for Dennis." (Laura, page 82)

For Jennifer, the feeling of blame is something which she has only recently started to overcome:

"For years, Jennifer was made to believe that Jack's behaviour was her fault and its only in the last few years that she has felt able to stand up and ask people, 'If it's my parenting tell me how my three children aren't all the same?". (page 66)

Natalie and Lisa's narrative illustrate how they felt very conflicted regarding their decision to permanently exclude Billy, particularly given their values of inclusion, whilst Natalie was particularly affected by feelings of guilt:

"Natalie and Lisa's school has a history of being inclusive, so to have had to permanently exclude Billy is incredibly upsetting for them… In some ways, permanently excluding Billy felt like they had failed…Natalie sobbed on the day of the permanent exclusion and was upset for several days afterwards. In some ways, she still feels incredibly guilty that they weren't able to do anything more to help Billy…In the end, there was an overwhelming feeling of relief that everyone could get back to focusing on what they should have been doing, but there was also hope, knowing that Billy was going to get the support he needed."(page 91)

4.10.2 Lack of Agency

The adults' narratives depicted a lack of agency at various points through feelings of helplessness, not knowing what to do, lack of choice or control and frustration that they were not being listened to. The feeling of not being listened to was most common, which consequently impacted the participants' sense of power or control. For Natalie and Lisa, this related to the LA not addressing their concerns that the school weren't able to meet Billy's needs:

"Sadly, Natalie wonders if the exclusion could have been avoided completely if they had been listened to earlier… Unfortunately, making the decision to permanently exclude Billy was what it took for people to accept what the school had been saying for a while; that they weren't the right place for him." (pages 91-92)

Jennifer felt frustrated that it had to reach crisis point before people acknowledged Jack's needs, despite the fact she had been expressing concerns and requests for assessments to be undertaken well before he was excluded. Similarly, Laura felt frustrated that she was the only one who could really understand Dennis's behaviours.

"It was always the same things causing Dennis's behaviour and Laura felt like they were just going around in a vicious cycle… It was so frustrating that she could see what was happening when everyone else couldn't." (Laura, page 78)

Hazel also experienced frustrations that her role as Ben's mother was not being acknowledged and decisions weren't being made based on Ben's best interests:

"Hazel was so frustrated. Everybody was telling her about Ben's legal right to be educated, yet they were listening to a man who didn't feed, clothe or care for him, who had no bearing on Ben's life. It didn't make any sense." (page 73)

A feeling of helplessness was also common in the adults' narratives. In many cases, this was related to not knowing what to do to help or support the child, particularly as their behaviour escalated. In Laura's narrative, feelings of helplessness began when Dennis was at nursery, and continued into primary school during the lead up to his permanent exclusion:

"All Laura could do was apologise because she didn't know what to do; Dennis never showed any of the same behaviours at home" (page 76)

"Laura burst into tears. She didn't know how she felt or what questions she was meant to be asking." (page 82)

For Natalie and Lisa, the decision to permanently exclude Billy felt like the only option they had left:

"Natalie, Lisa and the other staff had tried so hard to help Billy with all the knowledge and experience they had, but it eventually got to the stage where they had run out of options… they had kept going for as long as they possibly could." (page 90)

Similarly, Hazel and Jennifer experienced a lack of agency when choosing their children's schools after the permanent exclusion. For Jennifer, getting the EHCP was a significant step in getting back some control over Jack's future:

"One thing it has brought for Jennifer is that the control is partially back in her hands. Now she has a say in which secondary school her son will be going to…" (Jennifer, page 64)

"Hazel contacted several schools. The first didn't have a SENCO, so that would have been useless for Ben. When Hazel contacted the second school, the head teacher was so rude to her that it put Hazel off completely. She didn't want Ben to go to the last school on the list, but it was really the only option left." (Hazel, page 71)

4.11 Narrative Theme: The Permanent Exclusion

The permanent exclusion was a significant event in the adults' narratives. The detail with which they explored or described the incident which led to the exclusion varied. However, the child being contained in some way, being 'out of control' or physically hurting a member of staff were common details. In two of the narratives, there was a sense that the permanent exclusion was the only option, being termed as 'the final straw'

"It was the final straw the day the permanent exclusion happened. Hazel remembers that Ben had gone absolutely crackers and when she arrived at the school the staff were restraining him." (Hazel, page 72)

"Natalie can even remember what she was wearing and the activity the class were doing when it all happened on that last day. It was awful. Billy was asked to write a word and he just went wild. Natalie remembers the look on his dad's face when he collected Billy; he was like a broken man. They were both so sorry it had come to this point, but it was the final straw." (Natalie and Lisa, page 90)

However, there was also an acknowledgement that the permanent exclusion was in the child's best interests:

"Whether the exclusion had happened or not, Ben wasn't happy there and it was in his best interests to leave." (Hazel, page 72)

"Looking back now, Jennifer wonders if the permanent exclusion may have been the right decision, as without it, they wouldn't be where they are now." (Jennifer, page 68)

"Billy wasn't happy, and the time had come for school to say, 'We're not the right place, we're not meeting his needs'." (Natalie and Lisa, page 90)

4.11.1 Subtheme: The Build up

In all of the adults' narratives there was a build-up to the permanent exclusion through events such as fixed term exclusions and reduced timetables. However, for Jennifer, the build up to the exclusion also felt targeted, as if the school had been trying to find reasons to exclude Jack for some time:

"Jennifer feels that there was a build up to the permanent exclusion and that the school were waiting for an opportunity to say, 'You're not our problem anymore'. They told Jennifer that they were putting things in place for Jack, including a one to one, but she found out that they weren't…The school got social services involved once, despite the assessment showing there was no reason for them to be, and Jennifer felt this was yet another way the school were trying to find something wrong at home." (page 61)

4.12 Narrative Theme: The Wider Impact on the Family

In Jennifer and Hazel's narratives, a prominent narrative theme related to the wider impact the permanent exclusion had on the family, in addition to events leading up to it, such as reduced timetables. The practicalities of managing home life, including taking siblings to school and managing financial pressures, were particularly stressful.

"Jennifer was on maternity leave with their third child by this point, so luckily she was at home. However, Jennifer's husband didn't drive and he had to make sure he was earning enough money to support the family which meant it was difficult for him to pick up Elliott from school. Financially, the cost of permanent exclusion was a worry for them, especially if there was ever a chance it could happen again. It was stressful for everyone." (Jennifer, page 62)

Their narratives also illustrate how important it was for them to have a support network of friends and family around them. For Hazel, this allowed her to go to work when Ben was out of school, despite still feeling the pressure to care for her family:

"Ben was in school for two hours a day and Fred wasn't willing to help Hazel. Fortunately, her sister and neighbour offered to look after Ben on various days, but with the best will in the world, they still had their own lives to lead. Hazel still had bills to pay and children to

feed, yet she took time off to care for Ben because she considers him her responsibility. All in all, Hazel was off work for four months during that year." (pages 71-72)

4.13 Narrative Theme: Lack of Support and Guidance

Experiencing a lack of support and guidance was a prominent narrative theme in Laura and Jennifer's narratives. Both expressed a feeling of being in the unknown, particularly in reference to the processes of the education system, the permanent exclusion, and what level of support they, or their child, was entitled to.

For example, Laura described feeling that people just expected her to know what she was meant to be doing when it came to understanding how the education system works:

"As a first-time mother, Laura found it hard to understand the education system. She remembers that when it came to nominating Dennis's schools for the first time, she had no idea that there was an online system for it until her friend told her. Laura hadn't known about it because Dennis had been excluded from nursery, but it felt like, well, am I just meant to know this?" (page 81)

They both experienced a lack of communication either from the school or other agencies after the permanent exclusion happened. For example, Jennifer was given no guidance as to what to expect from the process of exclusion:

"Jennifer felt unsupported with Jack's permanent exclusion and she believes there is a lack of information and guidance available for parents to help them through the process. Various professionals were doing what they had to do in the background, but they didn't ever keep Jennifer updated about what was happening and she felt blind to the process…Similarly, it was through her own research that she found out what the school's responsibilities were following the sixth day of exclusion." (page 66)

Laura's experience with Early Help also illustrated how there was a lack of understanding amongst some professionals with regards to the roles and responsibilities of others working in different teams, which led to her being given incorrect information:

"Laura was asked by one of the exclusions officers to apply for an EHCP through Early Help, but after eight months Laura found out that Early Help don't help with these. Laura feels that this time was wasted, and the exclusions officer should have known the correct person to direct them to." (page 84)

The closure of Laura's Early Help case has also left Laura feeling unsupported and that their situation may not have been 'serious enough' for them to receive help she feels they need.

Hazel's narrative on the other hand illustrates how professionals supported her to get Ben back into education after she reached out to them for help:

"Hazel contacted all the people she could think of who had worked with Ben since nursery and explained the situation…Eventually, it was a social worker who argued the case that they should be acting in Ben's best interests and within a few weeks, Ben and Hazel were invited to visit the alternative provision." (page 73)

4.13.1 Subtheme: Emotional Support

Jennifer and Laura's narratives also illustrate a lack of emotional support. Their narratives portray the sense that people expected them to know what to do, both before and after the permanent exclusion happened. For Jennifer, the permanent exclusion was a traumatic experience, yet she did not feel she had the opportunity to express her feelings to anyone at the time. She felt there was an expectation to just 'get on with it':

"Jennifer doesn't feel that people realise the implications of permanent exclusion. When Jack was excluded, they just had to deal with it, but permanent exclusion isn't a quick and easy thing you can walk away from." (page 67)

Similarly, Laura's narrative depicts how, for a long time she felt unsupported, however, she really valued when a member of school staff asked how she was:

"It wasn't until about one week before Dennis was permanently excluded that someone from school, the school counsellor, actually asked Laura how she was feeling. Laura burst into tears. She didn't know how she felt or what questions she was meant to be asking." (pages 81-82)

4.13.2 Subtheme: Support and SEN

In two of the parents' narratives, the level of support they were offered appeared to be influenced by the extent to which their child had SEN. This was the case for Hazel when Ben was diagnosed with ADHD and ODD:

"After Ben was diagnosed, Hazel was offered all sorts of help. Her response to this was, 'Well I didn't need it yesterday, so I don't need it today!" (page 71)

Jennifer also faced a similar experience regarding the guidance she was given during the EHCP process:

"She noticed when it came to the EHC process, there was far more guidance regarding who to contact compared to when the permanent exclusion happened. It feels almost as if children who have been excluded from school are considered less of a priority compared to those who have an EHCP." (page 87)

4.14 Narrative Theme: Alternative Provision Support

Moving to the alternative provision was considered a positive step forward in all the adults' narratives. There is a sense that the alternative provision staff understand the child's needs and are able to provide the support that they need.

"Six weeks after Billy had started attending the alternative provision, Natalie and Lisa saw his mum and were so pleased to hear that he had settled in really well…The alternative provision was exactly what Billy needed in the end." (Natalie and Lisa, page 92)

"They have put action plans in place and understand children who have needs like Jack. Jennifer is quite confident that they are helping Jack, and an important thing for her is that there is amazing communication between her and the staff" (Jennifer, page 63)

In several of the narratives, the idea that the alternative provision could provide the child with a sense of belonging was also evident:

"On his first day, he went home and said to Laura, 'Mum, they're just like me!' Dennis had always been told he was naughty so he must have finally felt normal." (Laura, page 82)

"Soon after Ben's exclusion he was offered a place at the alternative provision. Hazel told him that the class sizes would be small and that there would be other children there with the same issues as him, so he came round to the idea of it." (Hazel, page 72)

Furthermore, the narratives illustrate how the alternative provision has been a source of support for the parents as much as the child. Their narratives reflect a feeling that they wouldn't be where they are now without the support of the alternative provision. For example:

"Ben moving to the alternative provision has been a massive change for the whole family, but a really positive change. Things have been a lot better for Ben. The smaller classroom sizes work really well for him, he is much less anxious and his confidence has grown. Before, when Hazel wasn't able to work, the family were struggling both emotionally and financially. Now they have a routine which works for everyone. Hazel dreads to think where they would be if it weren't for the alternative provision." (Hazel, page 74)

4.15 Narrative Theme: Hopes and Worries About the Future

In all the parents' narratives, the future is associated with both hopes and worries. This was a common narrative theme which illustrated how moving forward from the permanent exclusion is considered a positive and daunting journey. This was particularly the case when thinking about their child moving back into a mainstream school or starting secondary school.

Hopes were commonly associated with finding a school which will meet their child's needs:

"Ben is ready for secondary school and has told Hazel he won't carry on behaving like he has done when he gets there. Hazel just hopes they can find a school that is better able to meet Ben's needs than his primary schools ever were." (Hazel, page 75)

"Jennifer wants the right school to be able to give Jack a brighter future by helping him to develop the coping mechanisms he needs to succeed in the workplace. She wants to be able to walk out of a provision, with no unanswered questions and feel confident that they will be able to support him to thrive…With the right support, Jennifer is certain Jack will be able to reach his dreams." (Jennifer, page 68)

Similarly, the parents experienced concerns about their child's ability to manage being in mainstream school, as was the case for Laura:

"Currently, she still feels like they are in a catch twenty-two situation and will have to rely on the alternative provision to know what to do next…Laura doesn't feel that Dennis will be able to cope in mainstream school if he doesn't cope well in a class with only six other children." (page 85)

To differing extents, EHCPs are referred to in all of the parents' narratives. In two of the three narratives, EHCPs are discussed with regards to the future. For both Hazel and Jennifer, an EHCP is considered to provide some protection against the possibility of future permanent exclusions:

"Ben doesn't have an EHCP, but an application has been made. Hazel would love to say that Ben could manage spending eight hours a day in a class of thirty, but she worries that they could end up in the same situation they were in in primary school." (Hazel, page 74)

"SENCOs in mainstream secondary schools were telling them that with his behavioural needs, Jack wouldn't succeed in a mainstream school and seven schools turned him down in total. Ultimately, that is what pushed them to proceed with the [EHCP] process." (Jennifer, page 63)

Getting a draft EHCP is a particularly significant event in Jennifer's narrative, as she sees it as a positive turning point in Jack's education. However, it also brings with it many questions about his future:

"In a way, getting the EHCP felt like a huge relief after fighting for so long, but it also brings with it worries and questions for Jennifer. Jack is a bright boy and Jennifer worries about whether he will be able to reach his potential." (page 63)

4.15.1 Subtheme: Stigma of SEN

Amongst the worries about the future, Jennifer and Hazel both shared concerns regarding the stigma associated with SEN. For Hazel, this was primarily related to the type of provision she would choose for Ben:

"Hazel doesn't want Ben attending a special unit in a mainstream school. She knows what children can be like and doesn't want Ben to be singled out from everyone else; she doesn't want him to feel different." (page 75)

In Jennifer's narrative, her concerns regarding the stigma of SEN were prompted by the EHCP:

"Getting the EHCP has been a positive, but Jennifer worries about the stigma which can be associated with SEN. For Jack in particular, she has concerns about the kinds of comments his peers could make about him attending a special school when he is older. She also worries about the stigma attached to Jack's EHCP and how this will be received by some family members…So, whilst Jennifer wants people to know Jack has SEN, at the same time, she doesn't want everyone to know about it." (page 65)

4.16 Narrative Theme: Reflecting on the Past

Reflecting on their experience of permanent exclusion was a narrative theme in three of the adults' narratives. For Hazel, looking back on the past is not something she likes to do often, however, she recognises it is sometimes necessary:

"Revisiting her past, particularly with regards to her relationship with Fred, is something Hazel really hates to do, because she has had to go over it so many times. She doesn't want it hanging over her anymore. Yet, at the same time, it's part of everyone's life, so every now and again, she knows it must be unpacked from the box it's kept in and talked about. Hazel feels that unfortunately, there are parts of Ben's story which wouldn't make sense without it."
(page 75)

For Natalie and Lisa, reflecting on their experience was emotional, however, it also offered them an opportunity to evaluate their practice:

"Natalie and Lisa found looking back on the permanent exclusion to be a reflective experience. It helped them to think about their practice now, compared to what they did then and what could help other children they have in the school with similar needs to Billy." (page 92)

Jennifer described reflecting on the past as being a positive experience:

"Talking about the permanent exclusion has been quite nice for Jennifer. Having the opportunity to tell someone what happened, to feel that they care and understand how difficult the journey was for her is something she feels should be part of the permanent exclusion process. For parents to know that they aren't alone, that a permanent exclusion doesn't mean the end of their child's education wouldn't be a bad thing." (page 68)

The following sections of this chapter will now address the 'Narrative themes' and 'Sub-themes' identified in the pupils' narratives. It is important to note that the pupil narratives were significantly shorter than the adults' narratives due to the amount of data generated through the

interviews. Subsequently, the following sections are less detailed than those describing the narratives themes in the adults' narratives.

4.16 Pupils' Storied Narratives: Narrative Themes and Subthemes

4.17 Narrative Theme: Beginnings

Beginnings was a common narrative theme in the pupils' narratives. For both Connor and Gregg, nursery and the start of primary school were positive, however, the detail with which they were able to recall this time in their lives varied:

"Connor doesn't remember very much about school before Year 4, but the memories he does have are good. Connor remembers that he stayed in the same school from nursery all the way up to Year 3. He liked that his school was close to his house. He loved nursery and when he started primary school Connor enjoyed it." (Connor, page 58)

"Gregg's story starts with Nursery. Things at nursery started well at first, especially because Gregg met his girlfriend there. Looking back, he thinks it was a really good school. Moving to primary school was a new start and it was kind of good; things were fine." (Gregg, page 56)

4.17.1 Subtheme: Things Got Worse

Gregg's experience of beginnings at nursery, primary school and the alternative provision were characterised by things getting worse, in some cases, fairly soon after his arrival:

"Gregg feels like he was in Year 1 forever. He moved to the school he is at now in Year 2. It was really good to begin with, but like in his primary school, Gregg remembers it getting worse. A couple of days after he started, a big boy in his class did something and made Gregg bad. Luckily, the boy was moved into another class." (page 58)

"Gregg remembers that the noise started when he was in nursery. He remembers that it got busy with lots of children which was annoying, and it became louder and louder." (page 56)

4.18 Narrative Theme: Primary School Environment

The physical environment of their primary schools, particularly the outdoor space and the classrooms were narrative themes in Gregg and Connor's stories. These were features of their schools which they enjoyed and associated with positive memories:

"Gregg remembers what his primary school looked like well. It was very big and had a huge library, but there weren't many classes. Gregg liked the playground. It was small but it had a long climbing frame. Being in the classroom was fun because they were so colourful"
(Gregg, page 56)

"Connor remembers climbing a lot of trees in Year 1 and 2 because there was a forest area in the playground. This is what Connor remembers the most before he left and started a new school in Year 4." (Connor, page 58)

4.19 Narrative Theme: Trapped

Feeling trapped by teachers was a narrative theme in both pupils' narratives. This experience was more pertinent in Gregg's narrative and was also connected to a storyline describing his plans to escape school, which he likened to hiding from criminals:

"Gregg felt like he was trapped by the school gates; like a jail. He knew that the teachers would be able to catch him if he tried to climb the gates because he wasn't quick enough. Gregg used to run for the doors instead, but it wasn't easy to escape. He wanted to escape the classroom but the teachers kept trying to bring him back, and that felt hard." (page 57)

However, Gregg also wanted the teachers to catch him:

"Gregg thinks the teachers could have done more to help him. They could have run faster to catch him." (page 58)

Connor's experience of feeling trapped was one of the only details he was able to recall about his teachers:

"He particularly remembers them [teachers] locking him in the classroom and not letting him leave." (page 59)

4.20 Narrative Theme: The Safety of Home

Both Gregg and Connor's narratives gave a sense that home was a place of safety for them. For Connor, having a school which was close to his home was important to him and featured several times in his narrative:

"Connor remembers that he stayed in the same school from nursery all the way up to Year 3. He liked that his school was close to his house…Connor's new school was even closer to his house…" (page 182-183)

In Gregg's narrative, he sought the safety of home when the noise in school became too overwhelming:

"One night, Gregg felt something change in him. All of a sudden, Gregg gained super speed and he knew that this would help him to finally escape. The next day, when the noise at school became too much, Gregg used his super speed to climb the school wall and he ran home." (page 57)

4.21 Narrative Theme: Relationships

Teachers, family members and friends all featured in Gregg and Connor's narratives, however, the extent to which these relationships were meaningful and associated with positive memories differed between them. Connor's narrative illustrated how he experienced more positive relationships compared to Gregg's, whose narrative was characterised by more unhelpful and negative interactions with others.

4.21.1 Subtheme: Meaningful Relationships

Connor's narrative illustrates how many of his positive experiences are associated with meaningful relationships he has developed with friends and teachers:

"Connor's new school was even closer to his house and he made some good friends whilst he was there, friends he still plays with now…Connor knows his teachers care about him now and this is important to him. They also take him on trips to do things like rock climbing which are really fun…" (page 183)

Gregg's narrative on the other hand described one meaningful relationship he has had since Nursery:

"Things at nursery started well at first, especially because Gregg met his girlfriend there"
(page 181)

4.21.2 Subtheme: Unhelpful Relationships

In Gregg's narrative, many of his experiences are characterised by negative interactions with other children or teachers. Gregg also describes how his behaviours were often triggered by the actions of others:

"Being in the classroom was fun because they were so colourful, but some of the children would say things to Gregg which made him angry. One day, he got so angry that he threw a chair at one of them." (page 181)

Gregg's narrative similarly illustrates how others didn't seem to be aware of how their actions were impacting his behaviour, particularly with regards to the teachers. Rather than helping, they are described to make the situation worse:

"The teachers would try to make them quiet by telling everyone to 'Shut up', but then they would be shouting too!" Teachers didn't help Gregg. Instead they chased him, locked doors and brought him back to class again. Sometimes it was like being taken into prison with his hands behind his back." (page 181)

Connor similarly experienced negative relationships with the teachers in the school he was excluded from:

"Connor's memories of the teachers in this school were less positive. He found them to be rude and they treated him unfairly. He particularly remembers them locking him in the classroom and not letting him leave. Connor no longer remembers why he was excluded from this school." (page 59)

4.22 Narrative Theme: The Alternative Provision

The alternative provision was a common narrative theme in the pupils' stories. In a similar way to previous narrative themes, there are clear differences between Connor and Gregg's experiences. For Connor, the alternative provision has several advantages over his previous school, and his narrative further illustrates how he values friendships with other children:

"Now, Connor's school is much better. His friends are better and the building is a lot smaller than his old school. Connor likes smaller schools because there are less stairs and it's easier to get between lessons." (page 59)

Gregg's narrative illustrates how, despite feeling that the alternative provision is generally better than his old school, his experience has been impacted by negative interactions with another child, and he continues to feel trapped:

"It was really good to begin with, but like in his primary school, Gregg remembers it getting worse. A couple of days after he started, a big boy in his class did something and made Gregg bad. Luckily, the boy was moved into another class. Gregg has accepted that this is now his school. Things are generally better here, but some days he thinks it is rubbish. It is still annoying at times and there are some horrible children. Gregg still considers how he might escape and hopes he can get strong enough to climb the high fences one day." (page 58)

4.23 Narrative Theme: The Future

The future was a common narrative theme in the pupils' narratives which included aspirations for the future. Connor's narratives describe his aspirations for secondary school:

"Connor would like to go to secondary school in the future. He hopes he can go to the same one as his cousin and thinks his brothers will go there as well. From what he has heard, it sounds good, and it wouldn't take him long to get there. It would also mean he would get to spend more time with his cousin, so that would be good too." (page 59)

Gregg's thoughts about the future illustrate his thoughts about starting another school and his aspirations for adulthood:

"Gregg doesn't want to be at his old school, and he is never going back. If he were to go to another school in the future, Gregg hopes that he wouldn't have to do homework, because he doesn't have to do it now and he likes that. Gregg can't wait until he is an adult, because then that would mean he wouldn't have to go to school at all." (page 58)

4.24 Narrative Theme: Portrayal of Self

This final narrative theme was unique to Gregg's narrative. It was notable because it appeared throughout his story, and connected with other narrative themes, such as 'Relationships'. Gregg's narrative illustrated the various ways in which he conceptualised his behaviours and portrayed himself as being responsible for them.

For example, in many cases he internalised his behaviours:

"The noise became too much for Gregg; he thinks it made him crazy, so he had to run."
(page 57)

"One night, Gregg felt something change in him. All of a sudden, Gregg gained super speed and he knew that this would help him to finally escape." (page 57)

"A couple of days after he started, a big boy in his class did something and made Gregg bad." (page 58)

However, in another example, he externalised it:

"Gregg doesn't like noise. He is like the character Venom, because Venom finds loud noises hard to handle as well." (page 56)

4.25 Summary of Findings

The storied narratives are central to this research and, along with the shared narrative themes, represent the main research findings. The storied narratives illustrate how permanent exclusion from primary school was experienced distinctively by participants through the connection of various life events and experiences. However, through the identification of shared narrative themes, it has also been possible to address the research question in greater depth. These findings suggest that pupils, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school tell stories which describe similar feelings, thoughts and experiences throughout their journey.

The research findings will now be explored further in Chapter 5. This will include interpretation of the individual storied narratives and the shared narrative themes in relation to the relevant theory and research discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Strengths and limitations of the research will also be discussed, in addition to implications for future research and practice.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter will critically discuss the research findings according to the aims and central research question of the study. It will begin by examining how the findings relate to previous literature and relevant theoretical frameworks. The findings will then be applied and summarised according to eco-systemic theory. The researcher will consider their role in the research process and offer reflections on their learning with regards to the phenomenon of permanent exclusion from primary school. Finally, the research will be critiqued in terms of the strengths and limitations of the study, and implications for future research and practice will be considered.

5.2 Central Research Question and Aims of Current Study

This research aimed to gather an in-depth understanding of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school through the stories told by pupils, parents and school staff. By listening to and sharing participants' narratives, the researcher hoped to raise an awareness of what it can be like to experience permanent exclusion from primary school from different perspectives.

The current research therefore aimed to answer the central question:

'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?'

As discussed in Chapter 4, the storied narratives gathered in this research offer an insight into how permanent exclusion from primary school was experienced distinctively by participants through the connection of various life events and experiences. In addition, the identification of shared storylines in participants' narratives suggest that some events or experiences were common across the stories told.

To address the central research question, the following sections will explore the insights gained through participants' storied narratives in greater depth, in relation to previous literature discussed in Chapter 2 and relevant psychological theory.

5.3 Current Findings and Relevance to Previous Literature

The following sections will discuss the narrative themes and storylines which the researcher felt were most pertinent to participants' narratives and, as such, provide an answer to the question, 'What are the narratives of primary school children, parents and school staff who have experienced permanent exclusion?'.

It is important to note that due to the constraints of this thesis, it was not possible for the researcher to explore all elements of participants' stories in depth here. With that in mind, the storylines chosen to discuss in this section do not represent those that are more 'important' or 'superior', but those that are most apparent across the participants' narratives.

5.3.1 The Permanent Exclusion Journey

The storied narratives in this research illustrate how permanent exclusion from primary school was not an isolated event for the participants involved. Rather, their experience can be best understood as a journey which entailed various events, interactions and happenings over time. The participants' narratives depicted journeys of endurance, having all been faced with various obstacles to overcome. They demonstrate resilience, determination and hope, in addition to vulnerability and helplessness. In some cases, the obstacles participants faced remain part of their lives, such as Hazel and Jennifer's worries regarding the stigma of SEN.

Parker et al. (2016) similarly found that parents in their study experienced their child's exclusion from primary school as a complex journey characterised by a sense of turbulence and struggle. Whilst their model of exclusion illustrates the complexity of school exclusion also evident in this study, the narratives collected in the current research suggest permanent exclusion was a turbulent journey for all participants, not just the parents. As such, they offer a deeper insight into the experience of exclusion from primary school and illustrate the value in involving parents, pupils and school staff in this research.

The adults' journeys described complex interactions, feelings, and experiences that occurred between different levels, for example, the child, themselves and the school. An escalation in the situation within one context often led to a change or escalation in another. Furthermore, the event of the permanent exclusion itself appeared to be a point of crisis, resulting from a culmination of different interactions and challenges the parents and their families had experienced over time.

Firstly, this highlights the importance of thinking systemically when working with children and their families. Applying ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to the parents' narratives, it is clear how their experience was shaped through interactions between various systems. Yet, when reading all the adults' narratives, there are several occasions where it seems each system was functioning in isolation, or there was a lack of collaboration between them, particularly during the most challenging parts of their journeys. Arguably, the adults' stories illustrate the importance of collaboration and communication between schools, parents and pupils early on, in order to prevent situations reaching a point of crisis.

Furthermore, the current research illustrates how significant, traumatic events in two of the parents' lives influenced how they constructed meaning regarding their child's permanent exclusion. Previous research has associated having a challenging family life with exclusion and the negative impact these can have on the whole family, such as moving house, domestic abuse, and parental separation (Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016). However, unlike previous research, the parents' storied narratives in this study offer an insight into how such experiences impacted their relationships, thoughts and feelings about their child and their behaviour.

Conversely, the obstacles the pupils' talked about facing in their journeys were focused on the school context. For example, the noise became overwhelming for Gregg, whilst Connor's narrative suggested that the teachers were unfair to him. It is possible that the school context was more prominent in the pupils' narratives due to the timeline that was used during the interviews. However, 'home' was also a feature in their narratives, and it was clear they both felt this was a place of safety.

As suggested by Maslow's, (1943) hierarchy of needs, safety is an underlying psychological need. For Gregg, the fact that this was the place he wanted to 'escape' to suggests his safety needs were not being met in school. Connor's narrative also suggests he found it reassuring knowing that home was close to his school. When one considers the experiences Gregg and Connor had in school, particularly the way in which staff managed their behaviour, it is possible to understand how they would have felt school was an unpredictable and unsafe place to be.

5.3.2 Lack of Agency

In all the adults' storied narratives, their experiences of permanent exclusion were characterised by a lack of agency. This included feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, being out of control, and having a lack of choice with regards to decision making. These feelings were related to different events and phases of their story.

For the school staff, this was most evident as Billy's behaviours escalated and they felt less able to manage it with the support available in school. Natalie and Lisa described feeling that they required 'specialist' support to help manage Billy's behaviour, suggesting that they needed a 'different' skill set or knowledge to support him appropriately. Gross and McChrystal (2001) reported a similar finding, with one school in their sample feeling they were unskilled in supporting pupils with EBD, therefore requiring an additional full-time member of staff with experience in this area.

This idea of difference relates to the way in which pupils' behaviour was conceptualised in the current study. In the adults' narratives, the less that was understood about the behaviour, the more within-child their language became when describing the pupil, depicting a sense of 'difference'. For example, their use of words such as 'feral' and 'crazy'. Macleod et al. (2013) bring attention to social discourse in relation to parents, however, none of the previous literature reviewed in Chapter 2 addressed language use in relation to children's behaviour.

Taking a social constructionist and Foucauldian perspective, this finding illustrates how language has the power to construct ideas of what is 'normal' and what is not. Used to describe children's behaviour, language such as 'crazy' or 'out of control' places the 'problem' or the behaviour within-child. Furthermore, if this is the type of language that is associated with children who have been permanently excluded from school, it is possible to see how this could impact the assumptions and preconceptions made about them by parents, school staff and other professionals when they move onto a new setting.

At the same time, the adults' narratives describe the pupil being unable to control their behaviour, or that it was just part of who they were. Such observations were often made in comparison to the positive attributes of the child which made them kind and likeable. Arguably, the perception that neither the child nor the adult could control or change the child's behaviour perpetuates the concept of difference previously discussed. It also implies a sense of 'stuckness', that is, if no one can understand the behaviour, how can it be changed? This may suggest why the permanent exclusion itself was so often considered the 'final straw'.

The way in which Gregg conceptualised his own behaviour similarly related to the control he felt he had over it. In several instances, Gregg internalised his behaviour, attributing his behaviour to something within himself. However, he often attributed his behaviour to the actions of teachers and other children. Munn and Lloyd (2005) report their findings in relation to the categories of relativity, agency and dynamics, and similarly report how the pupils in their

study felt they had been provoked by teachers' attitudes and actions. In the current study, Gregg positioned himself as a protagonist who was trying to escape from the 'criminals' in his story. This suggests he felt he was 'good' in comparison to the teachers, and that he was doing what he had to in order to escape from them.

In relation to the parents' narratives, their experiences illustrate how they felt there was little guidance available to them from outside agencies regarding the exclusion process. This impacted their ability to advocate for their child and ensure they received the education they were entitled to after their exclusion. In Parker et al.'s (2016) study, the parents' sense of ability to advocate for their child was linked to their knowledge of the system and feelings of empowerment. In the current study, the parents described having to research the education system and exclusion process themselves, or relied on the knowledge of others, such as school staff or friends.

Pirrie et al. (2011) reported that parents felt a lack of agency in relation to choosing placements for their children following their exclusion. In the current research, two of the parents expressed feeling out of control in similar ways. For Hazel this was in relation to choosing a new school for Ben, whilst for Jennifer, she felt she had no choice but to pursue an EHCP for Jack when he was turned down by so many mainstream schools.

Additionally, the adults' narratives told of the child receiving fixed-term exclusions, internal exclusions and reduced timetables prior to their permanent exclusion. This echoes findings from previous research which have suggested past exclusions and disrupted education are common characteristics of children who have experienced exclusion from school (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011).

Natalie and Lisa's narrative offers an insight into why such measures were applied from a school's perspective. Their story illustrates how they faced a dilemma regarding how to keep everyone safe, whilst also supporting Billy so he could stay in school. However, the less in control of his behaviour they felt, the more within-child their explanations for his behaviour became and the less time Billy spent in school.

Drawing on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008), this may suggest that Natalie and Lisa's feelings of competency influenced their decision making, and by sending Billy home, it allowed them to regain a sense of control and the ability to carry out their roles as educators in the capacity they felt most comfortable and confident in.

Previous research by Gross and McChrystal (2001) found a lack of social and emotional support was available for the children in their study despite having a very high level of need. They report that the schools in their sample were convinced no additional amount of funding could have prevented the child being permanently excluded, which Gross and McChrystal (2001) suggest indicates how schools struggle to consider the different ways children with emotional needs can be supported.

Whilst Natalie and Lisa's narrative offers an understanding as to why their use of behaviourist approaches felt appropriate at the time, the findings of the current study somewhat echo those of Gross and McChrystal (2001). This raises important questions regarding how schools can be supported to feel competent in their ability to manage challenging behaviour in ways that prioritise children's emotional wellbeing.

5.3.3 The Emotional Impact

The storied narratives in the current study illustrate how the experience of permanent exclusion was, and in some cases continues to be a very emotional journey, particularly for the adults. The adults expressed similar feelings and emotions regarding their permanent exclusion journey, suggesting how permanent exclusion is never an 'easy' option for anyone.

Previous research by Parker et al. (2016) found that parents in their study experienced feeling stigmatised for their child's exclusion, in addition to guilt and failure. In the current research, these feelings were not limited to parents, as Lisa and Natalie similarly found the decision to exclude Billy extremely difficult. In the adults' narratives, such feelings were at times associated with a sense of helplessness which appeared to be exacerbated by a lack of support and guidance.

Findings from Macleod et al.'s (2013) study similarly suggested that service providers blamed parents to varying degrees for pupils' behaviour. In the current research, feeling blamed by professionals was experienced by two of the parents, Laura and Jennifer. This judgement was also felt to have been expressed by others, including school staff and family members.

The adults' storied narratives also illustrate how their experiences provoked some conflicting and positive feelings. Whilst the permanent exclusion was not considered a 'good' outcome in terms of the experience they had endured, the majority of the adults felt hopeful it would result in the pupil receiving the support they needed. This is similar to findings reported in Parker et

al.'s (2016) research, which suggested parents felt their child's permanent exclusion offered them opportunities to access additional resources and support.

In addition, the frustration of not feeling listened to was evident in all the adults' narratives. Both the parents and school staff described having points of view, knowledge or experience which they felt were not valued or considered by other stakeholders. These stakeholders included the school (from the parents' perspective) and outside agencies. This suggests the adults all considered themselves powerless at some point in their journeys, each seeking support from a system above them which they perhaps considered to have greater knowledge or power.

With regards to the pupils, their narratives did not express the emotional impact of their experiences as explicitly as those of the adults. This is likely to reflect their level of emotional literacy and could also be related to how comfortable they felt to express their feelings with the researcher.

Similarly to findings from previous research by Hayden and Ward (1996), the pupils' narratives suggested they felt unfairly treated by school staff. This was not explicitly linked to the event of their permanent exclusion, as was generally the case in Hayden and Ward's (1996) study. Instead Connor and Gregg spoke of other events which are likely to have led up to their exclusion, but arguably reflect moments that were most meaningful to them and held emotional significance. Their use of language not only depicts feelings of being trapped, frightened and unsafe, but also that of isolation and rejection. The lack of belonging and connection the pupils experienced in their excluding schools is therefore apparent.

5.3.4 Relationships

The importance of positive relationships between school and home was reported in many of the studies discussed in Chapter 2 (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden & Ward, 1996, p. 199; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011). In the current research, the parents' experiences of their child starting at the alternative provision similarly indicate they felt better supported when there was good communication between home and school, they had positive relationships with staff and they felt confident staff were knowledgeable in how to support children with SEN.

In all the narratives there is a sense that consistent and positive relationships were important for the child's wellbeing and ability to cope in school. Changes in key workers and 1:1 support

staff were associated with an escalation in the child's behaviour, whilst relationships at home similarly impacted the child in school. Previous research has reported on the importance of children who have been excluded having a consistent adult in school who knows the family well (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hayden et al., 1996; Parker et al., 2016; Pirrie et al., 2011). As suggested, the inconsistency of relationships for the pupils depicted in the adults' narratives indicate there was often not enough time for the child or the family to build trusting relationships with them. In cases where the child had built up a relationship with a member of staff over a longer period of time, either the child was excluded, or the member of staff left.

The pupils' narratives similarly suggest that friendships and trusting relationships were important to them. Many of the positive elements to Connor's story referred to individuals he had a close relationship with such as peers and family. His reference to knowing that his current teachers in the alternative provision care about him draws a distinct parallel with his past experiences. Previous research by Munn and Lloyd (2005) similarly illustrated a possible discrepancy between the quality of relationships with teachers for pupils who attended mainstream school, compared to those who attended smaller, specialist provisions which were generally far more positive.

Theories of attachment as well as Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs illustrate the relationship between feelings of safety and consistent, trusting relationships. Arguably, Gregg's narrative, which depicts very untrusting relationships with teachers and an unsafe environment, provides an explanation for why he felt he needed to 'escape'.

5.3.5 The Wider Context

The storied narratives in the current research illustrate how permanent exclusion relates to home, school and the wider social and political context.

For two of the parents in the current research, the experience of permanent exclusion had a significant impact on their family life. The financial implications of having to manage work commitments were evidently a concern and it was clear this caused significant worry for them. Previous research by Munn and Lloyd (2005), Parker et al. (2016) and Macleod et al. (2013) reported similar findings with regards to this strain on family life. The parents who described these struggles in the current research also had other children to care for, illustrating the pressure this placed them under to provide for their family.

Outside of the family home, two of the parents' narratives illustrated how they felt the education system was failing children with SEN, which related to teachers lacking training in this area. Consequently, the parents believed this was why the school had not understood how to support their child. This is somewhat reflected in Natalie and Lisa's narrative, as they did not feel they had the specialist knowledge to manage Billy's behaviour. Previous research by Gross and McChrystal (2001) also reported findings that parents felt the school had been unable to meet their child's needs, which had ultimately led to their exclusion. However, this appeared to be linked to the transition between primary and secondary school, as opposed to general support provided by the primary school which is the case in the current research.

Additionally, pressures related to funding and availability of resources were felt to have had an impact on the support available to the pupils in the adults' narratives. Barriers to accessing specialist support, assessment and resources included lack of funding or staff and strict thresholds for professional involvement, such as EPs.

Another finding from Gross and McChrystal's (2001) study also resonated with one of the parent's narratives. Gross and McChrystal (2001) reported that school staff felt there was poor communication between outside agencies, whilst the agencies themselves appeared to have limited knowledge of each other's roles. This was similarly experienced by Laura, who was given incorrect information about the EHC process.

As previously suggested, the parents in the current research struggled to receive the support they needed regarding various processes and procedures. Furthermore, Jennifer and Hazel's narratives suggested the support and guidance they were offered by outside agencies differed once their child had been identified as having SEN or received a diagnosis. This represents a systemic issue and suggests an assumption that the needs of children who have been permanently excluded are not considered as significant as those with EHCPs or medical diagnoses.

Finally, in relation to SEN, two of the parents' narratives illustrated their concerns regarding the stigma of SEN, and the impact this could have on their child's sense of identity. One parent, Jennifer, similarly expressed that her son having SEN was something she had to come to terms with as a parent, suggesting the impact it could have on her own sense of identity. Although not related to SEN specifically, previous research by Pirrie et al. (2011) similarly reported parents' concerns regarding the stigma their children could face having been permanently excluded.

Drawing on Macleod et al.'s (2013) and Pirrie et al.'s (2011) findings, the parents' narratives in the current research bring attention to wider social issues regarding SEN. Specifically, they illustrate how stigmatising discourses relating to SEN, disability and inclusion that exist within society can be internalised, influencing the beliefs and behaviours of individuals across and between systems.

5.4 Application to Eco-Systemic Theory

The current research illustrates how the experience of permanent exclusion can be understood in terms of the interactional processes that occur within, and between systems around a child. In the following sections, the findings will be summarised in relation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Figure 3 (page 128) additionally provides a visual representation of this model applied to the findings.

5.4.1 The Micro-System

The micro-system is considered to have the most direct impact on a child's development and refers to the interpersonal relations they experience on a day to day basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The current research findings illustrate how the experience of permanent exclusion was conceptualised in relation to a number of interacting factors related to the micro-system.

In relation to the child, their behaviour was often perceived as being 'within-child', yet at the same time it was felt they were often unable to control it. Positive personality traits were recognised in contrast to their behaviour, which in many ways was considered part of who they are. Within the home, participants' experiences were influenced by factors including significant life events, such as domestic abuse, loss, moving house and health issues. At the school level, factors including staff knowledge, sense of competency and agency, and approaches to behaviour management influenced the interpersonal interactions between the child, school and their family.

5.4.2 The Meso-System

The meso-system refers to the relationships that occur within and between the micro-systems around the child. For the pupils in this research, their sense of belonging and safety in school related to the quality of their interactions with staff. The emotional impact of experiences related to their relationships at home also impacted how they behaved in school. Similarly, feelings of competency and agency impacted the language used to refer to the child, consequently influencing how it was managed. This exacerbated frustrations for the parents

who did not feel their child was receiving the correct support. Furthermore, decisions made in school, such as the permanent exclusion, had a significant impact on family life.

Macro-system

Wider assumptions and beliefs about SEN and permanent exclusion

Cultural ideologies of 'normal' behaviour

Exo-system

Parents' work commitments

Meso-system

Thresholds for support

Language about behaviour

Micro-system

Child's personality traits

Pupils' sense of belonging and safety in school

Staff competency, knowledge and sense of agency

Pupils' behaviour in school

Perceptions of child's behaviour

Child

Parent frustrations regarding support

Funding

Significant life events eg, domestic abuse, loss and health issues

Behaviour management in school

Teacher-pupil relationships

Family life, eg, financial worries

Perceptions and beliefs regarding SEN

Figure 3 - **Visual conceptualisation of findings in relation to Ecological Systems Theory. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Anderson et al. (2014)**

5.4.3 The Exo-system

The exo-system refers to the wider systems in which a child does not actively participate, but where interactions or events which occur impact them indirectly, such as educational policies. The research findings illustrate how decisions made outside of the school system regarding thresholds and funding impacted the support available to pupils. Perceptions regarding SEN and the wider education system as a whole impacted parents' beliefs regarding their child's

identity. Furthermore, the decision made to permanently exclude a pupil as a result of interactions occurring within the micro and meso-systems influenced parents' workplace commitments.

5.4.4. The Macro-system

The macro-system relates to the cultural context in which a child lives, including the underlying beliefs and ideologies of that context. Some of the storied narratives in the current research imply certain beliefs regarding the label of SEN and the assumptions made about children who have been permanently excluded from school. The language in the narratives similarly reflect cultural ideologies regarding what may be considered acceptable, or 'normal' behaviour in schools, thus rejecting behaviours that do not conform to this ideal.

The findings of this research illustrate how permanent exclusion from primary school is experienced through interacting systems, discourses and beliefs. Furthermore, these interactions can have both causal and consequential functions, illustrating how participants experienced permanent exclusion as a complex journey.

The following section will now explore the researcher's learning and reflections from the research process. To enable this, the discussion will be written in the first person for the following section only.

5.5 Reflexivity

Throughout the research process, I have regularly reflected on my feelings, thoughts and beliefs, paying attention to how my personal values and perceptions could influence the research. The use of a research journal supported me to do this, in addition to regular supervisions with my academic tutor who could prompt reflections on my decision making. From the start of the research process, keeping a research journal has been a useful way to document my reflections, particularly after conducting interviews with participants and during data analysis. The following sections will focus on my reflections in relation to these areas.

5.5.1 Interviews with Pupils

In Chapter 3 I discussed my reflections in relation to some of the ethical issues I experienced whilst conducing this research (3.11). As I previously suggested, I was surprised by my reaction to using the term 'permanent exclusion' in front of the pupils who took part in the research. Whilst challenging within-child discourses is something I have always considered important throughout my EP training, this experience brought the label of 'permanently excluded' to the

forefront of my mind. It led me to reflect on the power it holds and the preconceived ideas that could develop when a child starts a new school based on assumptions about their past behaviours. I wondered what the impact had been for the pupils in the current research to hear they had been permanently excluded, and the effect this could have had on their self-identity.

Hearing the pupils' stories was challenging at times, particularly when they described being trapped. Gregg's narrative illustrated how he continues to feel trapped in school and it was difficult knowing that he felt this way without being able to work with the adults around him to try and improve the situation for him.

In the pupil interviews, I was also particularly aware of my positioning as the researcher and how this could have impacted the stories they told. Despite my reassurances about the confidentiality of the interviews (other than where safeguarding was a concern), I am aware they may have worried about telling me the truth or conversely could have felt pressured to tell me a particular version of events. I was pleased I made time in the research process to have additional rapport building sessions with the pupils as I felt this helped them to feel at ease and ultimately feel comfortable enough to share their stories with me.

5.5.2 Interviews with Adults

Interviewing parents and teachers for this research has provided me with a greater appreciation for the significant emotional impact permanent exclusion can have on families and schools. Furthermore, whilst I had a sense of the complexity of school exclusion, the interviews brought to light the many obstacles they can face. Their stories were moving to listen to, and I could sense the helplessness they had felt throughout their journeys. However, I also felt the love the parents had for their children and the passion the school staff had for their jobs as educators.

I feel that EPs are well placed to provide support for families and school staff who have experienced or are in the process of school exclusion. Following my experience of conducting this research, I hope this may be something I can advocate for in my practice going forward.

5.5.3 Data Analysis

Engaging in reflexive practice has been essential during all stages of the research. However, I found it particularly important during the process of writing the participants' storied narratives. During the interviews, I found it easy to be able to empathise with the participants as I was able to get a real sense of the emotional turmoil they had experienced. However, when listening back to two of the interviews during the transcription process, I noticed feeling frustrated and

to an extent angered by some of the events and points of view they shared. For example, staff consistently using physical containment to manage Billy's behaviour.

I realised that my reactions were a response to participants' stories conflicting with my values, particularly the beliefs I hold as a TEP. In relation to the management of Billy's behaviour, my frustrations stemmed from understanding psychological theory regarding the importance of emotional containment and attunement and feeling that the adults around Billy were not supporting him in these areas. Reflexivity was therefore important in being able to 'step back' from the transcript and remind myself that my position was that of a researcher, not a TEP.

When writing the interim and storied narratives, I also noticed that some of the language used to describe the pupils provoked feelings of discomfort in me. It felt at odds with my personal values to use language such as 'feral' to describe a child. However, I recognised that such language was chosen by participants for a reason and to replace it with a word of my choosing would remove the meaning and significance it held for the participants.

Finally, when writing the participants' storied narratives, I felt a real sense of responsibility to respect and do justice to the stories they had shared with me. When re-storying Hazel's narrative for example, I was very aware that her experience of domestic abuse reflected a private and personal time in her life. As illustrated in her narrative, she had also expressed her discomfort in revisiting this part of her past. Consequently, I felt very conscious about how she may feel regarding the level of detail I included and the language I used to refer to this experience when writing her narrative.

5.6 Trustworthiness of the Current Research

Polkinghorne (1988) argues that the exploration of human experience cannot be evaluated using the same systems and rigour that are applied to other scientific research. According to Lieblich et al. (1998) the traditional criteria used to evaluate quantitative research, that is, reliability, validity and generalisability, contradict the nature of narrative inquiry data which can be "read, understood, and analysed in extremely diverse ways" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 171).

'Validity' refers to how truthful or representative of reality research findings are and is therefore not suited to qualitative research which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As an alternative, 'trustworthiness' is often referred to when judging methods of data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Mishler (1990) proposed that "focusing on trustworthiness rather than truth displaces validation from its traditional location in a presumably objective, nonreactive and neutral reality, and moves it into the social world" (p. 420). Furthermore, he acknowledges that as social norms and practices regularly change, so can judgements of trustworthiness, even if applied to the same findings (Mishler, 1990).

Trustworthiness can be considered in relation to four categories: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability (Shenton, 2004). The trustworthiness of the current research will now be considered according to each of these categories in turn.

5.6.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the accuracy of research, particularly in relation to the process of data collection and research design (Creswell, 2007). It has been argued that the value or quality of narrative research does not lie in how accurately it represents 'truth', but to what extent rich narrative accounts portray the meaning of lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). The findings of narrative research therefore cannot claim to represent true reality (Polkinghorne, 1988) since "storied texts serve as evidence for personal meaning, not for the factual occurrence of the events reported in the stories." (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 479).

Yet, in relation to the claims made by narrative researchers, Polkinghorne (2007) argues that "readers should be able to follow the presented evidence and argument enough to make their own judgment as to the relative validity of the claim" (p. 476). The current researcher endeavoured to clearly document the research process, including data collection, analysis and interpretation of the research findings. In addition, several strategies were employed to support the credibility of the current study which will now be discussed.

Firstly, as previously described, the researcher engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. Creswell and Miller (2000) argue it is important for researchers to acknowledge their biases, assumptions and feelings as their research develops, since these have the potential to shape the research inquiry. As previously discussed in section 5.5, the current researcher regularly evaluated the research using a research journal and practiced reflexivity throughout the research process. Regular supervision sessions with the researcher's academic tutor also provided opportunities for the researcher to question decisions made throughout the process and identify potential areas of bias.

Secondly, member checking has been described as a crucial technique in establishing the accuracy and credibility of research findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This involves soliciting participants' views regarding research findings and interpretations of the data collected (Creswell, 2007). In the current research, the storied narratives were shared with participants. The purpose of this was to ensure that participants felt the storied narrative captured their experiences and reflected their storied selves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Member checking at this phase of analysis ensured that storied narratives could be revised should participants have wished them to be. This resulted in minor changes being made to the wording in one of the narratives.

In addition, member checking was carried out during the interviews by using clarifying questions to ensure that the researcher was clear on the timeline of the participants' story and details of different events they described (Creswell, 2007).

Finally, narrative themes identified in the second phase of data analysis were peer reviewed by a colleague and the researcher's academic tutor. Creswell (2007) argues that peer reviewing provides an external check of the research process. In the current research, peer-reviewers were asked to identify narrative themes they felt emerged from two different storied narratives which were then compared to the narrative themes identified by the researcher.

5.6.2 Transferability

Braun and Clarke (2013) describe transferability as "the extent to which (aspects of) qualitative results can be 'transferred' to other groups of people and contexts" (p. 282). Narrative research, as with other forms of qualitative research, is concerned with the detail and meaning of the phenomena being explored (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As described by Polkinghorne (2007), narrative research does not aim to make generalisable claims, but instead "issues claims about the meaning life events hold for people. It makes claims about how people understand situations, others, and themselves." (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 476).

As such, the purpose of the current research is not to generalise its findings to the wider population. However, by providing the rich, thick descriptions of participants' experiences, in addition to the contextual information regarding the research process such as data collection methods, it is hoped that the reader will be able to decide whether they believe the findings are transferable to their own contexts or situations (Shenton, 2004).

5.6.3 Dependability

Polkinghorne (1988) defines dependability in narrative research as "the dependability of the data, and validity to the strength of the analysis of the data" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 176). Whilst the data gathered in narrative inquiry is highly dependent on the context, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a full description of how the data was collected in order to advance the overall trustworthiness of the research (Polkinghorne, 1988).

As previously discussed with regards to trustworthiness, the current researcher has provided details pertaining to the research design and method, details of how the research was carried out and evaluation of the research through reflective appraisal. Appendices Q (page 196), R (page 202), S (209) and T (page 218), also provide details on the process of data analysis from raw data, to storied narratives, to narrative themes. In addition, Appendix H (page 184) includes a timeline of the research procedure, which provides information on when key points in the research, such as data collection, were carried out.

5.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to measures taken to limit the impact of bias in research, particularly in relation to the neutrality of the data collected (Letts et al., 2007). Letts et al. (2007) suggest that a researcher can enhance the confirmability of their research by engaging in reflective practice throughout the research process. As previously discussed, the researcher kept a research journal throughout all stages of the current study. In writing this thesis, they have also acknowledged their role in the collection and interpretation of the data and endeavoured to provide reflective commentary about the chosen methods and research design throughout. Furthermore, the process of member checking additionally sought to limit the impact of bias during data collection and analysis.

5.7 Critical Evaluation of the Current Research

5.7.1 Strengths

This research aimed to provide an in depth understanding of permanent exclusion from primary school. Using a narrative inquiry approach, it has been possible to gather rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, offering a unique contribution to the current research base. As discussed in section 5.3, the narratives gathered offer some different insights into the experience of exclusion from primary school compared to previous research.

Furthermore, previous literature discussed in Chapter 2 illustrated some disparity in terms of the degree to which the views of children, parents/carers and school staff have been reported with regards to their experiences of primary school exclusion. Despite the researcher experiencing some difficulties recruiting school staff, the voices of pupils, parents and school staff are all represented by the current research and arguably in greater detail when compared to previous research.

The use of life grids was effective in aiding the unstructured interviews with adults and were felt to complement the narrative approach to inquiry. Participant feedback from using the life grids was positive and it was often referred back to during the interviews, offering a prompt for both the researcher and the interviewee. Whilst the life grids provided a structure to the interviews, this structure was determined by the participants, suggesting their narratives reflected elements of their story that were most meaningful to them.

5.7.2 Limitations

Narrative inquiry was chosen as the methodological approach to this research due to the detail it could provide in terms of understanding the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. However, the researcher is aware that narrative inquiry can be criticised for its lack of structured analytical procedures and subjectivity, and that this could be considered a limitation of this study. The meaning that participants give to their narratives during interviews cannot be considered the 'truth', as it has been co-constructed (Polkinghorne, 2007). However, as Polkinghorne (2007) argues, "the storied descriptions people give about the meaning they attribute to life events is…the best evidence available to researchers about the realm of people's experience." (p. 479).

Another potential limitation of the current research relates to the sample of parents, pupils and school staff who took part. The researcher acknowledges that participants were recruited in one LA, PRU and mainstream school. As such, their narratives were told in relation to a specific context, in which the range, access and type of services relating to school exclusion may differ from other LAs. It could therefore be argued that the transferability of the current research is limited. However, as previously acknowledged, this research did not seek to make generalisable claims regarding permanent exclusion.

The fact that more parents took part in the research compared to school staff and pupils could also be considered a limitation of this study as their voices are more prominent in the findings. It could therefore be argued that the findings are biased towards parental experiences of

permanent exclusion. The researcher would argue that the imbalance of participant voice only reflects some of the difficulties of real-world research and explores potential barriers to recruitment in Chapter 3 (3.6.2).

5.7.3 Implications for Future Research

The findings of the current research illustrate the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school is an interactional process between systems. The participants' narratives suggest that stakeholders, such as exclusion officers and EPs, who were not involved in the current research played significant roles in their stories. Future research could therefore include the perspectives of other individuals in the meso and exo-systems, as this would help to provide an even deeper understanding of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school from a range of perspectives.

It may also be beneficial for future research to explore the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school across different LAs. This would offer insights across different contexts and could highlight alternative practices and ways of working that are working well to reduce exclusion rates or support families whose children have been excluded.

Finally, the limited engagement from the excluding schools in the current research highlights potential issues regarding recruitment for future research. Understanding the perspectives of staff in excluding schools is important if exclusion rates are to decrease, however, headteachers could be reluctant to take part in this type of research if they are concerned about with whom or where the findings will be shared. This illustrates the importance of being transparent about research purposes, as well as how participants will be anonymised. The current researcher had to be flexible in order to facilitate the interviews with school staff, suggesting flexibility to interview staff outside of school hours may encourage their engagement.

5.8 Contributions to Practice

5.8.1 Implications for EP Work

The research findings are relevant to and have several implications for EP practice. Firstly, they emphasise the importance of preventative ways of working and EPs bringing together those who know a child best to jointly problem solve before events reach 'crisis point'. In this research, parents and school staff experienced similar challenges, such as feeling unheard or out of control, yet there appears to have been a lack of connection and communication between

them. EPs are well placed to support collaboration between staff and parents through various models and frameworks, such as consultation.

Secondly, Natalie and Lisa's storied narrative illustrated the emotional impact they experienced whilst trying to support Billy's complex needs, including after the permanent exclusion. School staff may not have the resources or time to provide peer support for each other, yet having space to reflect and problem has many benefits to practice. EPs have the skills and attributes to offer support to school staff through 1:1, group supervision or coaching sessions. This may be particularly helpful for 1:1 staff or key workers who are supporting children at risk of exclusion.

Thirdly, the findings illustrated how the impact of permanent exclusion on parents and children's families were multi-layered and expressed a clear lack of support from outside agencies. In addition to advocating for the involvement of parents wherever possible in their casework, and particularly complex cases, EPs are well placed to support parents before and after their child has been excluded outside of the school context. This may be through joining up with other services, such as, parent support services, to jointly offer training or set up support groups, for example.

The research findings also suggested that the less that was understood about a child's behaviour, the less likely staff and parents would feel they could do anything to change it and consequently position it within the child. EPs' knowledge of child development and psychological theory mean they are best placed to provide training on topics such as attachment, emotion regulation and attunement, which are vital for understanding what a child could be communicating through their behaviour and how they can be supported.

Finally, it is not clear whether the pupils in the current research had had previous opportunities to talk about their experience of exclusion prior to taking part in the research. However, this study illustrates the importance of EPs advocating for children and gathering their voices in the work that they do, particularly for children who may be at risk of exclusion and going through similar experiences to Gregg and Connor. Furthermore, given the discourses of behaviour discussed in this research, exploring identity, perhaps through personal construct psychology approaches, could be helpful in understanding how a pupil at risk of, or who has been permanently excluded, constructs themselves and their behaviour in relation to others.

5.8.2 Sharing the Research Findings

The findings of the current research will be shared with key stakeholders who have been involved in the research process. Stakeholders include the participants, the SENCO and headteacher from the PRU and the EPS in which the research took place.

Firstly, the researcher will be sharing the research findings with all participants via letter. This is expected to be sent by September 2020 following the research viva. Given the age of the children who took part in the research, the researcher will adapt the summary of the findings so that it is age appropriate. This is likely to be in the form of a leaflet or one-page sheet similar to the pupil information booklet provided at the start of the research.

The support from the SENCO and headteacher of the PRU was fundamental to this research taking place. They expressed an interest in being sent a summary of the research findings and will similarly be sent this via letter as described above.

The researcher plans to share the research findings with the EPS in a presentation following the completion of the research viva. Currently, it is not possible to ascertain when this may be due to the outbreak of COVID-19. However, the researcher hopes there will be an opportunity to do so in the near future.

The researcher would like to share the findings with other stakeholders they feel could gain an insight from them. These specifically include the exclusions team and the parent support group run by the LA. Parents and staff who took part in the research expressed their desire for others to hear their stories and felt it would be helpful for these agencies to know about their experiences. For example, one parent suggested that the exclusions team could develop a guide for parents on the exclusions process. The researcher hopes that she will be able to facilitate these discussions following the research viva.

Finally, in order to disseminate the findings to the wider public, the researcher intends to submit an article for publication based on this research. Additionally, they hope they will have the opportunity to present the findings at a research conference for EPs and TEPs in the near future.

5.9 Conclusion

This research has endeavoured to contribute to a gap identified in previous literature by providing an in-depth exploration of the experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. Underpinned by values of social justice, advocacy, respect and beneficence, this

research is concerned with understanding the perspectives of pupils, parents and school staff as a step towards informing future change and reducing exclusion rates.

Using a narrative inquiry approach, the stories of primary school pupils, parents and school staff were gathered, offering rich and detailed insights into the complexity of permanent exclusion. The participants' storied narratives illustrated how their experiences of permanent exclusion were distinctively connected through various events, interactions and happenings over time. Yet, their stories also depicted similar feelings, thoughts and experiences throughout their journeys.

The findings illustrate the emotional impact of permanent exclusion, with participants describing feelings including blame, guilt and helplessness, but also a sense of hope for the future. Stress as a result of financial and practical implications of the permanent exclusion further exacerbated some of these feelings. The narratives suggested pupils' sense of safety and belonging in school was threatened by a lack of consistent, positive relationships in school, whilst the support and communication offered by the alternative provision was valued by parents.

Additionally, this research identifies a connection between feelings of competency, agency and the conceptualisation of behaviour. Understood within the framework of eco-systemic theory, this connection illustrates complex interactions that occur between different systems. Constraints placed on schools relating to funding, training, and thresholds for support exacerbated parents' frustrations, who similarly experienced lack of support from outside agencies. Perceptions regarding SEN and the wider education system also impacted parents' beliefs regarding their child's identity. Together, these interactions were reflected in a within-child discourse where behaviour was considered unmanageable.

Consequently, this research illustrates how permanent exclusion from primary school is experienced through interacting systems, discourses and beliefs. Furthermore, it suggests how marginalising discourses within society related to SEN and inclusion can impact the way in which parents, school staff and professionals respond to diversity. The researcher suggests how EPs are well placed to challenge these discourses through joint working between schools, families and pupils, sharing knowledge of psychological theory and helping those around a child to feel confident and competent in their ability to move towards positive change.

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Appendix A

Summary of Research from the Literature Review

Article Title and Journal Title	Authors	Date	Research Aims	Research Design	Ethical Issues Considered?	Recruitment Strategy and Sample	Data Collection and Analysis	Research Findings	Critique
What happens to pupils permanently excluded from special schools and pupil referral units in England? *British Educational Research Journal .*	Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen and McCluskey	2011	To understand the immediate and subsequent destinations of young people following their permanent exclusion in the school year 2005–2006.	Qualitative	Opt-in consent received from young people. The authors note the challenges of gaining this –some LAs reluctant to provide information which could identify young person. LAs were assured of the confidentiality of the data and were fully briefed on the purposes of the research.	Recruitment strategy: Study conducted in 3 regions: London, South East and North West chosen based on numbers of permanent exclusion available at the time. Questionnaire sent to all special schools and PRUs listed on database provided by the Department for	'Repeated interviews' with service providers regarding the young people identified in the sample. Information also gathered from less formal contacts by phone or email with large range of service providers. Analysis not described.	Findings split into themes: Disrupted educational pathways, reasons for exclusion, destinations post exclusion, range of provision, achievement and attainment, placement decisions and individual agency, what worked (this focused on relationships). Quality of personal relationships made a difference.	Lack of clarity on process of data analysis. Lack of detail on parent and young person views. No age given on tables of participants so unable to decipher between older and younger pupils.

					Education and Skills.		Unclear how many in sample were primary age versus secondary age.
					24 young people who had experienced permanent exclusion from a special school or PRU during 2005-2006 were selected who met the inclusion criteria.		Lack of details on methodology.
					Sample: 19 were permanently excluded from special schools and 5 from PRUs.		
					Aged between 9 years and 7 months to 14 years and 8 months. Majority between 12 and 14 when excluded.		
					23 male, 1 female. 8 were of ethnic		

						backgrounds. 6 were children in care (CIC).			
'.he was excluded for the kind of behaviour that we thought he needed support with…'A qualitative analysis of the experiences and perspectives of parents whose children have been excluded from school. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.*	Parker, Paget, Ford and Gwernan-Jones	2016	To understand parents' experiences of permanent exclusion, inform support for children at risk of exclusion and explore the influences parents believed were important from their child's exclusion.	Qualitative	Ethical approval granted from University of Exeter Medical School Research Ethics Committee. Authors report that all parents offered opportunity to share their experiences as part of the SKIP study but do not explain process of gaining consent otherwise. Authors do not discuss ethical procedures of the SKIP study related to gaining pupil consent.	Recruitment strategy: Participants part of larger project; the Supporting Kids, avoiding problems (SKIP) study which explored relationship between school exclusion and children's psychopathology. Recruited from Southwest of England September 2011-July 2013. Children identified by an educational or mental health practitioner. Sample:	Open-ended interviews Thematic principles applied to analysis by two researchers who jointly coded transcripts. Nvivo used.	Three overarching themes: Complex journey of exclusion; a continuum of coping and wider impacts. Illustrated using visual model of exclusion. Exclusion found to have a significant impact on both emotionally and practically for whole family. Findings illustrate complex relationships between individual, school, family and community. Findings discussed with reference to socio-political	Ethical issues relating to whether the children had given permission for their data to be used. Findings are not discussed in relation to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) – this is a missed opportunity considering the focus of the study and Despite the focus of the study, the authors do not discuss implications from their findings in terms of how parents could be supported in much detail. The generalisabilty of findings is limited. Did not include teacher and pupil voices.

						Children aged 5-12 years (children in Year 7 also included), their parents, class/headteacher). Mean age 8.5 years, 35 male, 2 female. 31 had received fixed term exclusions, 4 permanent, and 2 were at risk of exclusion.		context eg, cuts to services but the authors offer suggestions regarding timely support for children and how learning support assistants could be used effectively.	Fathers views are underrepresented.
Parents of excluded pupils: customers, partners, problems? *Educational Review.*	Macleod, McCluskey and Cullen	2013	To explore how a sample of service users talked about parents during research interviews.	Qualitative	The authors acknowledge needing to be cautious about what they infer from the data, however, no further ethical issues are considered in relation to carrying out the research. This therefore raises ethical issues	Recruitment strategy: The same as Pirrie et al. (2011) Sample: Families of pupils who have been permanently excluded from alternative	Semi-structured interviews. 'Simple content analysis' guided by specific research questions. Constant comparative approach also used.	Parents perceptions on to what extent they could exercise choice varied - those in employment more likely to take initiative to contact services. Service providers talked about the parents in relation to	Ethical issues relating to deception and consent. Lack of detail regarding the method of data analysis. Lack of fathers' voice in sample.

						regarding deception and informed consent.	provision (PRU or special school).		three themes: *'poor parenting', poor parents'* and *'pests'*	
							28 young people aged between 9 and 14 at the time of their exclusion.		Parents were generally seen as 'part of the problem' service providers.	
									The authors conclude by highlighting the importance of service providers getting to know families if the limited parental identities reflected in their findings are to change.	
									Service users have a role to play in shaping the way parents are positioned in society.	
									Parents and service providers exist in a system where resources and work-loads are stretched which must be	

Title	Authors	Year	Rationale	Methodology		Sample	Data Collection	Findings	Critique
								addressed in the wider picture.	
Primary exclusions: Evidence for Action. *Educational Research.*	Hayden, Sheppard and Ward	1996	Concerns regarding the impact of exclusion from school given influenced the authors decision to conduct this piece of research.	Mixed Methods	None.	118 LAs in England and Wales sent questionnaire - 46 were returned from London Boroughs, Metropolitan Districts and County Councils. Data collected on exclusions related to 1992/1993. Case studies from 2 LAs: one County Council and one Inner London. Within this, 38 in depth case studies were conducted (interviews).	National Survey of LAs Analysis of 233 case files in 2 LEAs. 'In-depth' interviews	Survey findings: Only 28 of 46 LEAs could supply info on child's age, sex and ethnicity. 90% of those excluded were male and older primary (aged 9-11 years) but equal proportion in lower age group in London LEAs. Less than half of LEAs able to give reasons for exclusions. Refusal to comply with school rules and verbal abuse towards teachers most frequent in London and Metropolitan LEAs but physical aggression towards other pupils most	Outdated and reflects discourses of the SEN system prior to the Children and Families Act (2014). Very little parent voice reported. No child voice reported. Reliability and robustness of the research questionable - the authors do not state how the LAs or participants were selected to take part in the case studies. Information on data collection and analysis also omitted. Study funded by the 'ESCR' but this is not defined.

								often in county council LEA.	
								Case study findings: Parents reported experiencing difficulties with their children at home. They felt that schools could provide discipline in ways they could not.	
								Most children were in families where relationships between adults were difficult and majority in single parent households.	
								Support structures eg, individual people in school and services outside of school felt to be important for keeping numbers of exclusions down, eg, key worker.	
								Schools felt under pressure not to exclude permanently	

						but wouldn't do it differently - often 'the last straw'.			
Faces behind the figures: Interviews with children excluded from primary school. *Children and Society.*	Hayden and Ward	1996	To try and understand exclusion from the viewpoint of the children themselves. Central tenant of research as a whole to explore the different perceptions and perspectives of the exclusion event and the wider context in which it occurred.	Qualitative	The authors detail the methodological and ethical issues related to conducting research with children. They also note that the interview focused on exclusion in order to reduce the likelihood of causing additional upset to the children interviewed.	Recruitment strategy not explained. Sample: Sub sample taken from Hayden et al.'s (1996) study. 22 primary aged children excluded from 20 different schools in 2 English LAs (County Council and inner London Borough) during 1993 and 1994 academic year.	Semi structured interviews using open ended questions, prompts and booklet developed to help elicit pupil views. Information regarding data analysis not provided.	Findings split in to 4 themes: Getting excluded; time out of school; going back to school; school rules, rewards and sanctions. Exclusion a significant and negative event for the children but looked forward to returning to school. Maintaining relationships with peers was considered particularly important. The majority of children felt their exclusion had been unjust.	Outdated The authors do not refer to the issue of reflexivity, particularly the role of the researcher in developing a shared meaning with the child. No information given regarding data analysis.

Exclusion and Excluded Pupils. *British Educational Research Journal.*	Munn and Lloyd	2005	To contribute to the debate over disciplinary exclusion from school. To explore the nature and extent of exclusion from school in Scotland and perceptions of a sample of pupils who have been excluded.	Qualitative	None.	Recruitment strategy not detailed. In 3rd project, pupils given music shop tokens. Sample: Project 1 - 3 of 11 children interviewed were primary aged pupils. Pupils in the other 2 projects were predominantly secondary (based on information gathered from contacting the author). Small numbers of pupils interviewed in each project: 11;30;25 respectively.	Semi-structured interviews Content analysis of themes.	Findings reported in themes: Relativity (perceptions of fairness of exclusion), Agency (who was responsible for the exclusion) and Dynamics (family circumstances/home/ outside school). Based on framework suggested by Atkinson (1998) on Social exclusion. Although pupils took responsibility for their actions, they also felt provoked by teachers' actions. Positive relationships and the importance of feeling respected by teachers were prominent. The findings also illustrate the important role of	Scotland so legislation not relevant. Recruitment process not explained in detail, questioning the replicability and rigour of the study Reliability of participants' responses questionable since music shop tokens given as incentives in Project 3. Pupils ages not specified making it difficult to tell which perspectives relate to those who have experienced exclusion from primary or secondary school.

								school ethos in supporting pupils' sense of belonging.	
The Protection of a Statement? Permanent exclusions and the SEN Code of Practice. *Educational Psychology in Practice.*	Gross and McChrystal	2001	To identify common factors and issues around the exclusion of Statemented pupils from mainstream schools. Key research questions: · What were the main reasons for the exclusions? · What were the identified needs of the excluded students? · How were Statements used to support these students? · What were the views of schools, pupils and parents on the type of	Mixed methods	None.	Information obtained from LEA files on SEN database. Where IEPs not available schools were contacted to obtain them. 6 case studies identified for in depth study after analysis of case files. Difficulties in recruiting meant that the final selection of 6 cases there were fewer representations at 'extreme ends ' of EBD than planned. Sample: All children with Statements who were permanently excluded from mainstream school in 1998-1999 in one urban LEA (n=26)	Semi-structured interviews. Analysis not specified.	Information from LEA files/IEPs: Half of children permanently excluded due to violence towards peers or adults - all boys. One third often had at least one fixed term exclusion in the past. Several children had a change in home situation prior to exclusion. One third had come to school following a permanent exclusion from previous school. Association between literacy/learning needs and EBD.	Little attempt is made to draw together information from the different case studies. Unclear to what extent the experiences or attitudes described are those of primary or secondary school staff. No indication of the method used to analyse the data, questioning the reliability of the findings.

| | | | | support needed and factors that affect this? | | | 10 primary and 16 secondary school pupils.

Interviews with: One Head Teacher, one Deputy Head, two Heads of Year/tutors, two special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and one learning support assistant (LSA).

Three carers were interviewed (two parents, one grandparent), and two of the six pupils—those who were currently in school. Those who were not in school failed to attend for interview despite several attempts to make contact. | | Absence of monitoring and reviewing progress for IEPs.

Funding from statement tended to be used towards LSA support.

Secondary schools less likely to involve support from outside agencies than primary schools:

6 primary school pupils received long term support (defined as more than two months) from an EBD support team or EP;

3 had received the same support just prior to their exclusion and 1 received no support through an outside agency before their exclusion. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | | The majority of whom (N=9) had received no support from outside agencies prior to their exclusion.

Interviews:

Parents interviewed reported good communication with school regarding the exclusion process. However, parents interviewed were the same who excluding schools had reported they had a positive relationship with.

Increasing demands from secondary school curriculum and teachers' capacity to meet the needs of individual pupils noted by parents.

Parents felt schools were unable to meet | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

								their child's emotional needs.	
								Lack of clarity from the schools' perspectives as to which agencies they could contact for support before the decision was made to permanently exclude a child.	
								Minority of schools struggled with issue of inclusion.	
								Home school relationships difficult for many schools.	
								Lack of communication between agencies in LEA.	
								Issues regarding communication between pastoral	

| | | | | | | | | team and SEN teams in Secondary schools.

Just over half of schools did not hold an interim annual review prior to the children receiving permanent exclusion. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

PRU Headteacher Research Information Letter and Consent Form

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Alternative Provision Head Teacher Research Information Letter

Dear Head Teacher,

My name is Vicky Feingold and I am currently studying on the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London. I am also working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist for the Educational Psychology Service in the XXX team. As part of my training I am researching permanent, primary school exclusions. I am particularly interested in exploring the experience of this phenomenon from the perspectives of pupils, their parents and staff who knew the child at the time of their exclusion.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission for your school to participate in this study and to provide you with additional information about the purpose and nature of the research.

The title of this research is:

Permanent Exclusions: Exploring the Narratives of Primary School Pupils, Their Parents and School Staff

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school from the perspective of pupils, their parents and staff. I am particularly interested in understanding their narratives of the permanent exclusion, which may include how events leading up to and following the permanent exclusion are perceived by participants.

I would like to recruit pupils and parents for this study who meet the following research criteria:

- Primary aged pupils who have received a permanent exclusion from school within the last 6 months to 2 years. This must have been more than 4-6 weeks prior to their participation in the study.
- Parents (or main caregivers) of children who meet the 'pupils' criteria.

Participants will be asked to take part in an interview about their experience of the permanent exclusion.

Why is this research being done?

Research indicates the significant impact permanent exclusion from primary school can have on a child's life (Kenny, 2018). With the numbers of permanent exclusion from primary school rising, reducing these numbers is of local and national importance and vital in supporting the wellbeing of these children and their families.

It is clear that school exclusion is a complex process and involves an interaction of different systems between the child, their family and school (Lally, 2013; Moore, 2009). This suggests that understanding permanent exclusion from these different viewpoints is vital. Whilst previous research has included the perspectives of children, parents and teachers, none has included the views of all three in relation to permanent exclusion from primary school in particular, and is a gap which this research aims to address.

Confidentiality

Names of schools/settings will be coded and anonymised, and participants will receive a pseudo name to protect their identity. All data including transcription records of interviews will be destroyed after the research has been completed (estimated date - September 2020). A summary of the research will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and to all participants should they wish to receive it.

What will the study involve?

I will ask you to send an information letter (which I will provide) to pupils and parents who meet the research criteria, which will outline the purpose of the study and what their role in the research would be. Participants will be offered an opportunity to meet with me in person or via telephone to discuss the research and to ask any further questions prior to giving consent.

If the parent and child both consent to participating in the study, I will arrange a time to meet with each of them individually. Each participant will again be offered the opportunity to ask any further questions about the research at this point. Participants will then take part in an individual interview lasting for approximately 1 hour. The interview will be recorded using a dictaphone. The information collected during the interview will be kept confidential; the only circumstance in which I would break this confidentiality would be if a safeguarding issue arises, where the participant tells me something that means either themselves or somebody else is in danger.

Location

With your permission, it is anticipated that the interviews and meetings with children and parents will take place within the school setting in a quiet room. Parents will be given an opportunity to choose whether they would prefer to be interviewed at home or in school. All information during the study will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time during the research, and up until the point of data analysis. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself or the participants, without any obligation to give a reason.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you would like to give permission for your school to participate in this research, please complete the attached consent form and return to the address below or via email. If you would like to discuss the nature of the research further, please contact me on the details provided below.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Vicky Feingold
Trainee Educational Psychologist

(Educational Psychology service contact details)

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Alternative Provision Headteacher Research Consent Form

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which this school has been asked to participate and I have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which the school will be involved.

I understand that the school's involvement in this study and particular data from this research will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research has been completed.

I consent for the school to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw the school from the research at any time during and up until the point of data analysis without disadvantage to the school and without being obliged to give any reason

Head Teacher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)...

Head Teacher's Signature...

Date...

Thank you!

Parent Research Information Letter and Consent Form

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Parent/Carer Participant Information Sheet

My name is Vicky Feingold and I am training to become an Educational Psychologist. I work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in XXX and I am also studying at the University of East London. As part of my training I am doing a project which aims to explore pupil, parents/carers and staff experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school.

You and your child are invited to take part in this research. Before you decide whether you would like to participate, please take some time to read the information below. This explains why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Why is this research being done?

As part of my training I am researching the experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school from the perspectives of children, parents/carers and staff. With your help, I would like to find out your story of your child's permanent exclusion from primary school. This may include what events happened leading up to, during and after their exclusion.

I hope that this project will help anyone working with children to better understand permanent exclusion from different perspectives, in order to inform best practice for those working in schools and work towards preventing exclusions. What you and your child tell me might be able to help other children and their families in the future.

Who will be in this project?

As well as asking you and your child about your experiences, I would also like to ask a member of staff from your child's excluding school, eg, headteacher, SENCO or class teacher the same questions. I would like to find out about your child's permanent exclusion from their perspective. By interviewing children, parents/carers and staff about their experiences, I hope to represent the views of those most likely to be involved when a child is permanently excluded. This may help to better understand permanent exclusion and how support can be put in place for children in order to help prevent exclusions in the future.

If you and your child want to be part of this project, what will happen?

- ✓ Please complete the consent form attached to this information letter and return it to me, either via email or post using the details below. Alternatively, you can return it to XXX (SENCO) at XXX. If you have any questions about the research you would like to discuss before signing the consent form, please contact me via phone or email using the details provided at the bottom of this letter.

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- ✓ Once I have received your consent form, an information sheet about the research will be shared with your child. I will arrange to meet with them at school for a short chat (around 20 minutes) to answer any questions they may have about the research and what is involved. I will also talk with them about getting their written permission to include them in the project and ask them to sign a consent form.
- ✓ If your child agrees to take part, I will speak with them about their experience of their permanent exclusion for approximately one hour on a different day arranged with the school.
- ✓ I will contact you to find out where you would like your interview to take place; at school or in your home. If you would like to meet in person before the interview we can also arrange this, or you can ask any further queries you may have over the phone. During the interview, I will ask you some questions about your experiences of your child's permanent exclusion. This will last for approximately one and a half hours. It is possible that a member of staff from XXX who you are familiar with may accompany me, should the interview take place in your home.

Confidentiality

The conversations I have with you and your child will be recorded using a tape recorder, so that I can accurately recall what has been said. No one else will listen to the tape or read the notes I have made. If you are unsure about this you will have an opportunity to speak with me about it before the interview.

Whatever is said in the interview will remain confidential. The only time I would have to speak to someone else would be if you or your child told me something that means you or someone else is in danger. If you or your child become upset during the interview, we can stop at any time.

Both you and your child can also decide if you no longer want to participate in the research at any time during, and up until the point of data analysis (at which point the information will be anonymised and I will not know who has said what).

Who will know you and your child have been part of the research?

The only people who will know that you and your child have decided to take part in the research will be you, your child, their current school/setting, their previous headteacher and the member of staff who will be interviewed (if this is not the headteacher). The school will know who has been involved but they will not know who has said what. If anyone else might need to know about your/your child's participation in the research, then I will speak to you first to check this is OK and explain to you why this is.

When I have talked to all of the children, parents/carers and staff who agree to take part in the project I will write a research report. The responses given will not be linked to names, schools or any personal details. Nobody will be able to identify you or your child from the report. I will keep all of the tape recordings and notes taken during the interviews in a safe place during the research and when I have finished the project these will be destroyed.

A summary of the research report will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and also with you if you wish to receive it.

What should I do if I have further questions?

Please contact me using the details below.

Kind regards,

Vicky Feingold
Trainee Educational Psychologist

(Educational Psychology Service address, contact number and TEP email address)

Thank you!

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Parent/Carer Research Consent Form

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above programme of research in which I and my child have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the details of my involvement have been explained to me.

I understand that my/or my child's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research has been completed.

Please tick the boxes below to indicate your consent:

- I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me ☐

- I hereby freely and fully consent to my child taking part in this study ☐

- I additionally consent for my child's school file and professional reports to be shared with the researcher ☐

- I consent to the school my child was permanently excluded from to be contacted by the researcher and for a member of staff who knew my child to be interviewed as part of the research ☐

- Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw myself and/or my child from the study at any time during and up until the point of data analysis, without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason ☐

Participant's Name (Parent) (BLOCK CAPITALS)..

Participant's Signature (Parent)..

Child's name...

Date...

Thank you!

What are the stories of primary school children who have been permanently excluded?

My name is Vicky Feingold and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist. This is somebody who tries to help schools make sure children are happy and doing well in school.

What is this research about?

I am interested in what your permanent exclusion from primary school was like for you and how you describe how it happened.

I hope that this project will help anyone working with children to know from a child's point of view what it is like to be permanently excluded from primary school, as this might help other children in the future.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research!

Who else will be in this research?

I would also like to ask your parent/guardian and a member of staff who knew you well from your previous school the same questions. I would like to find out how they experienced your permanent exclusion. This is because it will help to give a picture of what it is like to experience permanent exclusion from different points of view.

What will happen if I take part in the research?

First, I will meet you in your school for a short chat to answer any questions you have about the research.

If you decide you would like to talk with me about your experience of permanent exclusion, I will meet with you again on a different day, for no longer than 1 hour. A member of staff you know well might also stay with us when we talk.

When we talk I will record our conversation using a tape recorder. This is so that I can remember what you have told me. If you are not sure about this then you can talk to me about it when we meet.

What sort of questions will you ask me?

I am interested in hearing your story about your exclusion. To help you tell your story, I might ask you questions about:

What happened before you were permanently excluded?

What happened when you were permanently excluded?

What happened after you were permanently excluded?

As well as talking, we might also do some drawing to help you tell me your story.

What will you do with the information I tell you?

No one else will listen to the tape recording of our conversation or read any notes I might make.

What you say will be kept between us. The only time that I would have to tell someone else something you have told me, is if I think either yourself or somebody else might be in danger.

If you get upset by talking about your experiences with me we can stop straight away. XXX (SENCO) will also be around for you to speak to afterwards if you need to for any reason.

What if I change my mind about taking part in the research?

You can change your mind at any time if you decide you do not want to take part in the research project any more.

What happens now?

If you are interested in taking part in this research project, please let XXX (SENCO) know and she will tell me.

I will then come and meet with you to give you some more information and answer any questions you might have before you make your final choice.

Thank you!

Vicky Feingold
Trainee Educational Psychologist
XXX Educational Psychology Service

What are the stories of primary school children who have been permanently excluded?

You are invited to take part in some research!

Pupil Consent Form

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Pupil Research Consent Form

If you would like to take part in this research project and talk with me about your experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school, please complete this form. All you need to do is tick the boxes that apply to you.

1. I have been given and read the information about the research and I understand what it is about.

       Yes   No

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

       Yes   No

3. I understand that I do not have to answer any questions if I do not want to.

       Yes   No

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

       Yes   No

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

Yes   No
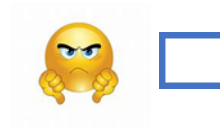
6. I understand that I can change my mind about taking part in the research project at any time during, and up until the time when Vicky analyses the research data (when no one will know who has said what) and this will not affect the way I am supported in school.

Yes   No
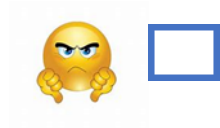
7. I agree to take part in the research project.

Yes   No
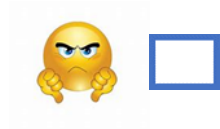
Participants Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)...

Participant's Signature: ....

Date...

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)...

Researcher's Signature..

Date...

Thank you!

Mainstream Headteacher Research Information Letter and Consent Form

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Head Teacher Research Information Letter

Dear Head Teacher,

My name is Vicky Feingold and I am currently studying on the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London. I am also working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist for the Educational Psychology Service in the XXX team. As part of my training I am researching permanent, primary school exclusions. I am particularly interested in exploring the experience of this phenomenon from the perspectives of pupils, their parents and staff who knew the child at the time of their exclusion.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission for your school to participate in this study and to provide you with additional information about the purpose and nature of the research.

The title of this research is:

Permanent Exclusions: Exploring the Narratives of Primary School Pupils, Their Parents and School Staff

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school from the perspective of pupils, their parents and staff. I am particularly interested in understanding their narratives of the permanent exclusion, which may include how events leading up to and following the permanent exclusion are perceived by participants.

I am hoping to recruit a member of staff for this study who taught or knew a primary aged pupil well, who received a permanent exclusion from your school within the last 6 months to 2 years. This must have been more than 4-6 weeks prior to their participation in the study.

The participant could be yourself, or another member of staff who knew the child best at the time of their exclusion, such as a SENCO or class teacher. Participants will be asked to take part in an interview about their experience of the permanent exclusion.

Why is this research being done?

Research indicates the significant impact permanent exclusion from primary school can have on a child's life (Kenny, 2018). With the numbers of permanent exclusion from primary school rising, reducing these numbers is of local and national importance and vital in supporting the wellbeing of these children and their families.

It is clear that school exclusion is a complex process and involves an interaction of different systems between the child, their family and school (Lally, 2013; Moore, 2009). This suggests that understanding

permanent exclusion from these different viewpoints is vital. Whilst previous research has included the perspectives of children, parents and teachers, little has included the views of all three in relation to permanent exclusion from primary school in particular, and is a gap which this research aims to address.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

Names of schools/settings will be anonymised, and participants will receive a pseudo name to protect their identity. All data, including transcription records of interviews will be stored securely. Data will be destroyed following the completion of the research. A summary of the research findings will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and also participants should they wish to receive it.

<u>What will the study involve?</u>

An information letter has been sent to parents of pupils who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school and are currently attending a different setting. Parents and pupils who meet the inclusion criteria and wish to take part in the research have now provided consent to do so. This included their permission for me to contact their child's excluding school, so that a member of staff can be interviewed concerning the exclusion.

I will contact you to identify the member of staff who knew the child best at the time of their permanent exclusion, i.e., yourself, SENCO or class teacher. I will then provide you with an information sheet to give to the staff member, outlining the purpose of the study and what their role in the research would be. Participants will be offered an opportunity to meet with me in person or via telephone to discuss the research and to ask any further questions prior to giving their consent. Otherwise, they can fill out the consent form attached to the information letter and return it to me at the address provided.

If the member of staff consents to participating in the study, I will arrange a time to meet with them. They will again be offered the opportunity to ask further questions about the research at this point. The member of staff will then take part in an individual interview lasting for approximately an hour and a half. The interview will be recorded using a dictaphone. The information collected during the interview will be kept confidential; the only circumstance in which I would break this confidentiality would be if a safeguarding issue arises, where the participant tells me something that means either themselves or somebody else is in danger.

<u>Location</u>

With your permission, it is anticipated that the interviews with staff will take place within the school setting in a quiet room, at a time that is convenient for them. All information during the study will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location.

<u>Disclaimer</u>

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time during the research, and up until the point of data analysis. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself or the participants, without any obligation to give a reason.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you would like to give permission for your school to participate in this research, please complete the attached consent form and return to the address below or via email. If you would like to discuss the nature of the research further, please contact me on the details provided below.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Vicky Feingold
Trainee Educational Psychologist

(Educational Psychology Service address and contact number)

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Headteacher Research Consent Form

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above programme of research in which this school has been asked to participate and I have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which the school will be involved.

I understand that the school's involvement in this study and particular data from this research will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research has been completed.

I consent for the school to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw the school from the research at any time during and up until the point of data analysis without disadvantage to the school and without being obliged to give any reason

Head Teacher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)...

Head Teacher's Signature...

Date...

Thank you!

Staff Member Research Information Letter and Consent Form

UEL Doctorate in Professional

Educational and Child Psychology

Staff Member Participant Information Sheet

My name is Vicky Feingold and I am training to become an Educational and Child Psychologist. I work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in XXX and I am also studying at the University of East London. As part of my training I am doing a project which aims to explore pupils', parents'/ carers' and staff' experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school.

You are invited to take part in this research because you taught or knew a child well who has received a permanent exclusion from your school within the past 6 months – 2 years. Before you decide whether you would like to participate, please take some time to read the information below. This explains why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Why is this research being done?

As part of my training I am researching the experiences of permanent exclusion from primary school from the perspectives of children, parents/carers and staff. With your help I would like to hear your story regarding an experience of permanent exclusion with a primary aged child you knew well or worked with prior to their exclusion. This may include what events happened leading up to, during and after their exclusion.

I hope that this project will help anyone working with children to better understand permanent exclusion from different perspectives, in order to inform best practice for those working in schools and work towards preventing exclusions. What you tell me might be able to help other children, families and staff in the future.

Who will be in this project?

As well as asking you about your experience, I will also be asking parents/guardians and children who have experienced permanent exclusion from primary school the same questions, in order to understand it from their perspectives. By interviewing children, parents/carers and staff about their experiences, I hope to represent the views of those most likely to be involved when a child is permanently excluded. This may help to better understand permanent exclusion and how support can be put in place for children in school in order to help prevent exclusions.

If you would like to be part of this project, what will happen?

- ✓ If you would like to take part in the research, please sign the attached consent form. Alternatively, please contact me on the details below and we can discuss any further questions you may have about the project prior to giving your consent. Please return your signed consent form to your headteacher.

- ✓ Once I have received your consent form, I will contact you to find out when a convenient time would be during a school day for the interview to take place (this could be after school if most convenient). Interviews will take place at your school. If you would like to meet in person before the interview takes place we can also arrange this, or you can ask any further questions you may have over the phone. During the interview, I will ask you about your experience of the permanent exclusion. This will last for approximately one and a half hours.

Confidentiality

The conversation I have with you will be recorded using a tape recorder, so that I can accurately recall what has been said. No one else will listen to the tape or read any notes I make. If you are unsure about this you will have an opportunity to speak with me about it before the interview.

Whatever is said in the interview will remain confidential. The only time I would have to speak to someone else would be if you told me something that means you or someone else is in danger. We can stop the interview at any time should it become upsetting for you. You can decide if you no longer want to participate in the research at any time during, and up until the point of data analysis (at which point the information will be anonymised and I will not know who has said what).

Who will know you have been part of the research?

The only people who will know that you have decided to take part in the research will be you and your schools headteacher. The school will know who has been involved but they will not know who has said what. Similarly, the parent and child taking part in the research will not know which member of staff is being interviewed. If anyone else might need to know about your participation in the research, then I will speak to you first to check this is OK and explain to you why this is.

When I have talked to all of the children, parents/carers and staff who agree to take part in the project I will write a research report. The responses given will not be linked to names, school or any personal details. Nobody will be able to identify you from the report. I will store all the tape recordings and notes taken during the interviews securely and in a safe place during the research. When I have finished the project the data will be destroyed.

A summary of the research report will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and with you if you wish to receive it.

What should I do if I have further questions?

Please contact me using the details below should you wish to discuss the researcher in more detail:

Kind regards,

Vicky Feingold
Trainee Educational Psychologist

(Educational Psychology service and TEP contact details)

Staff Member Participant Research Consent Form

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the details of my involvement have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research been completed.

Please tick the boxes below to indicate your consent:

- I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me ☐

- Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time during and up until the point of data analysis, without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. ☐

Participant's Name (staff member) (BLOCK CAPITALS)..

Participant's (staff member) Signature.....

Date..

Thank you!

Appendix H

Timeline of the Research Process

Date	Research Phase and Activity
May 2019	**Recruitment** - Contact made with PRU Headteachers - Initial meeting with PRU Headteacher
September 2019	**Recruitment** - Parent letters sent
October 2019 – November 2019	**Recruitment** - Parent responses and consent received - Parents contacted by researcher to introduce themselves - Initial meeting with all pupils - Mainstream schools contacted and participants recruited
November 2019	**Recruitment** - 2nd visit with pupils
November 2019	**Data collection** - Pilot study conducted
November 2019 – December 2019	**Data Collection** - Interviews with pupils, parents and school staff
December 2019 – February 2019	**Data Analysis** - Transcription - First phase of analysis (including sharing storied narratives with participants)
February 2019 – March 2019	**Data Analysis** - Second phase of data analysis
February 2019 – April 2019	**Completing thesis write up**

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Elley Wakui

SUPERVISOR: **Janet Rowley**

STUDENT: Vicky Feingold

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Title of proposed study: What are the narratives of primary school children, their parents and teachers, about an experience of permanent exclusion?

DECISION OPTIONS:

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

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

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

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY
(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Approved

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Only a couple of typos in the letter to Headteachers.

Also, it might be nice if the child's invitation/consent also included a pointer about who they might talk with if they want to after the interview (perhaps more appropriate for the older children)?

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

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

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

Student's name: Vicky Feingold
Student number: u1724880

Date: 22/02/2019

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES / NO

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

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

HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

LOW

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

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*:   Elley Wakui

Date: 11/02/2019

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

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

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

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix J

Parent Debrief

Debrief

Thank you for taking part in this research. This research aims to explore the stories of primary school children, their parents and staff who have experienced a permanent exclusion. The research question for this study is 'Permanent Exclusions: Exploring the Narratives of Primary School Pupils, Their Parents and School Staff'.

The interview you took part in was designed to allow you freedom to tell your story about your child's exclusion and your experience of it. Some of the prompts I gave you during the interview were provided to help you remember events which may have occurred as part of this experience.

Without your participation, this research would not have been possible. Listening to your views helps those working with families to better understand permanent exclusion from different perspectives, and think about how school exclusions could be prevented in the future.

What happens now?

Everything you talked about with me will be kept strictly confidential and only I will know you have said them. All of your details and any names of people, places, schools etc, will be anonymised at the point of data analysis so that no information can be traced back to you. All of the data collected as part of this research will be stored securely and deleted after the project has been completed. Data may be kept up to three years after completion of the project if the decision is made to publish the research, however, all data will continue to be stored securely during this time. A summary of the final research will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and also with you if you wish to receive it.

I hope that taking part in this research has been an enjoyable experience for you. However, if you feel affected by what we have spoken about together, the following organisations may be helpful should you wish to speak to someone confidentially for support and guidance about you or your child:

Samaritans

Free 24 hours helpline: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: https://www.samaritans.org/

Young Minds

Free parent helpline: 0808 802 5544

Thank you again for taking part in this research and sharing your story with me.

Appendix K

School Staff Debrief

Debrief

Thank you for taking part in this research. This research aims to explore the stories of primary school children, their parents and staff who have experienced a permanent exclusion. The research question for this study is 'Permanent Exclusions: Exploring the Narratives of Primary School Pupils, Their Parents and School Staff'.

The interview you took part in was designed to allow you freedom to tell your story about the exclusion and your experience of it. Some of the prompts I gave you during the interview were provided to help you remember events which may have occurred as part of this experience.

Without your participation, this research would not have been possible. Listening to your views helps those working with families to better understand permanent exclusion from different perspectives, and think about how school exclusions could be prevented in the future.

What happens now?

Everything you talked about with me will be kept strictly confidential and only I will know you have said them. All of your details and any names of people, places, schools etc, will be anonymised at the point of data analysis so that no information can be traced back to you. All of the data collected as part of this research will be stored securely and deleted after the project has been completed. Data may be kept up to three years after completion of the project if the decision is made to publish the research, however, all data will continue to be stored securely during this time. A summary of the final research will be shared with XXX's Educational Psychology Service and also with you if you wish to receive it.

I hope that taking part in this research has been an enjoyable experience for you. However, if you feel affected by what we have spoken about together, the following organisations may be helpful should you wish to speak to someone confidentially for support and guidance:

Samaritans

Free 24 hour helpline: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: https://www.samaritans.org/

Education Support Partnership
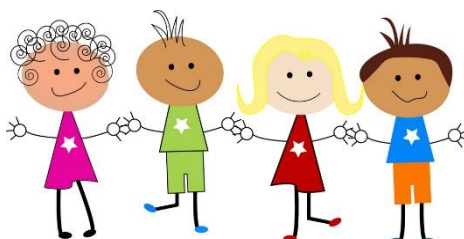
Free 24 hour helpline: 08000 562 561

Text: 07909 341229

Thank you again for taking part in this research and sharing your story with me.

Pupil Debrief

Dear………………

Thank you for taking part in this research and telling me your story about permanent exclusion from primary school.

This research aims to explore the stories of primary school children, their parents and staff who have experienced a permanent exclusion.

Without you, this research would not have been possible. Listening to your story helps those working with families to better understand permanent exclusion from your point of view, and might help other children in the future.

What happens now?

I am going to be looking at what other children, parents and school staff have told me about their experience of permanent exclusion from primary school. You will remember that we talked about your information being kept 'anonymous', which means that you, and everyone else taking part in the research will be given a different name so that no one else will know what you have said.

When I have looked at all of the information I have gathered and finished the research, I will send you a letter telling you what I have found out, if you would like one.

I hope that taking part in this research has been an enjoyable experience for you, but if you feel you would like to speak to an adult about anything we have talked about together, please tell an adult you know well in school, such as XXX (SENCO), who will be able to help you.

Interview Schedule

Main Interview Question

'Please tell me your story of (child's name) permanent exclusion from primary school from the very beginning.'

Introducing Timeline

'To help you tell me your story, we can use the timeline to help plan what you would like to tell me about (child's name) permanent exclusion. The idea is that each box represents a significant event or experience that occurred and plays an important part in your story. The beginning of the story goes into the first box of the timeline and the most recent part of the story goes in the last box. What phrases or titles come to mind for the other boxes on the timeline?

Additional Questions/Prompts

'Tell me about the next box on the timeline which you called '….'

'Can you tell me more about that?'

'Would you describe any event in your story as having been helpful?'

'Which of the events in your story do you think were most significant?'

'Looking back over our conversation, how do you feel about the experience of telling your story?'

'For you, which parts of your story have been most worthwhile sharing?'

'Would you like to add any further comments about your experience of telling your story?'

Completed Life Grid Example
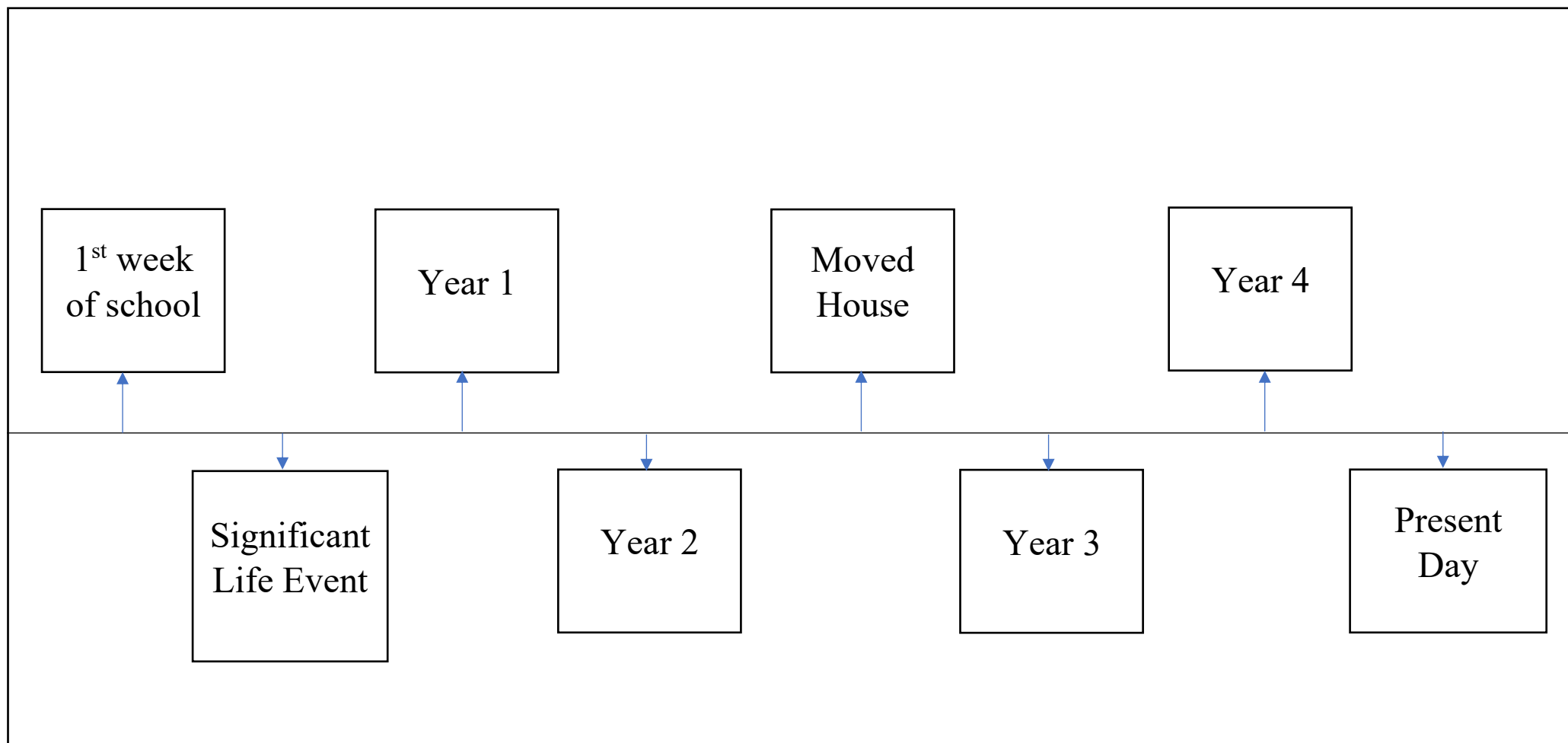
Pupil Timeline

| Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | The future |

J: Erm (…) so yeah th-the permanent exclusion in 2017 ((in overlap)) was a massive (.) factor

INT: ((in overlap)) mmm (..) ok (.) yeah

J: Obviously that's (..) what we're here for

INT: Yeah yeah yeah absolutely

J: Erm

INT: 2017

J: 2017-October 2017 yeah

INT: Ok

J: Erm (..) went over to-he's gone over to the [alternative provision] (.) and (..) seemed (.) had a bit of a honeymoon period

INT: Mmm

J: Seemed to be settled

INT: Mmm

J: Then we went back to our old ways

INT: Ok

J: Erm (.) but (..) now a massive thing for me

INT: Yeah

J: Not necessarily for [child] is we now have an EHCP

INT: Right ok so is

J: Well we have a draft

INT: Right ok

J: It's a massive (.) achievement

INT: Yep ((in overlap)) that's important for you

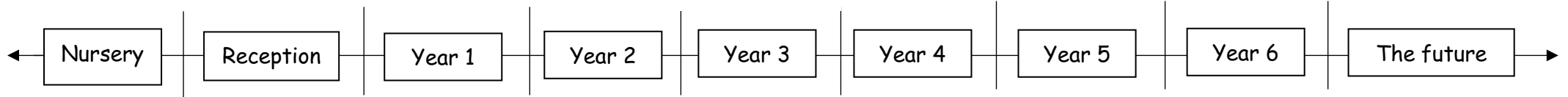J: ((in overlap)) we've been pushing for that since starting school ((in overlap)) really

INT: ((in overlap)) right ok ok (.) that's a long journey isn't it

J: ((in overlap)) we've been pushing for-we've been pushing for the EHCP for at least two years but I've been pushing for people to (.) understand my frustrations and that my child is not (…) showing the same (.) behaviours as I hate the word normal child

INT: Mmm

J: Mainstream

INT: Mm mm

J: Child (.) erm since he was (.) two two and a half

INT: Yeah

J: So this age (.) erm (..) so (.) yeah its its ((in overlap)) been a long time coming

INT: ((in overlap)) that's big for you

J: It's a bit of a relief

INT: Yeah

J: So obviously (.) and now we've got the more relief which is gonna be ((speaking to child)) ok you look under there (..) erm (..) the next big significant thing for us (.) as a family in [child's] journey is we're now looking into specialist secondary

INT: Ok

J ((speaking to child)) your car's under there ok darling (…) erm (.) we're looking into (…) specialist secondary ((in overlap)) for him

INT: ((in overlap)) ok ok

J: I'm going to look at somewhere on Friday

INT: Right ok

J: Erm (.) ready to put on the EHCP ready to (.) nominate

INT: Yeah

J: The school

INT: Yep yep

J: For next year (..) so he'll stay where he is for the next year

INT: Ok

J: Erm so we're hoping that that's going be a massive positive

INT: Mmm

J: And a massive (..) somewhere that can actually support him to flourish

INT: Yeah yeah

J: So (.) that

INT: That's for you ((in overlap)) ok

J: Yeah yeah ((in overlap)) that is a massive for me it's a massive thing ok it comes with its own worries and its own

INT: Yeah absolutely

Examples of Colour Coded Transcripts According to Elements of the Three-Dimensional Framework

Key to Colour Coding:					
Interaction		**Continuity**			**Situation**
Personal	*Social*	*Past*	*Present*	*Future*	*Context*

Laura's Transcript

L: ((pause)) [child] started nursery absolutely perfect

INT: Mmm

L: Erm (.) I'd known since (.) he was born (.) there was something different

INT: Ok

L: Erm (…) he would (..) from the age of nine months ((laughter)) he was erm (.) destructive

INT: ((in overlap)) right

L: ((in overlap)) ((laughter)) he would climb inside the cabinets and suddenly the doors would fall off

INT: Oh

L: He'd unscrew them with his fingers

INT: Oh

L: Erm (.) and he had an obsession of climbing

INT: Right

L: So he'd always be on the windowsills

INT: Ok

L: Erm (.) and (.) it all started about nine months when he started the climbing

INT: Ok

L: Erm he was (.) really advanced like (..) erm with walking and stuff

INT: Mm

L: Erm (.) he had erm (..) he was allergic to (.) his wee and poo being on his skin

INT: Mm ok

L: And so (.) he wouldn't (.) he chose not to have a nappy on

INT: Mmm

L: Erm (.) and that was it from the moment he had no nappy on he was off

INT: Right ok

L: Dancing climbing (.) climbing on the tv units dancing at the tele (.) all sorts

INT: Mmm

L: He was just (.) always on the go

INT: Yeah

L: Erm (.) but (.) lovable

INT: Mmm

L: So lovable

INT: Mmm

L: Erm (..) just a little bit of a monkey

INT: Yeah

L: But (.) a cheeky monkey not (.) naughty

INT: Yeah yeah

L: Erm (..) he started nursery erm his best friend is ten weeks older than him to the day

INT: Yeah

L: And she's a little girl (.) and (.) they are absolutely (.) they idolise each other

INT: Aww

L: And erm

INT: That's lovely

L: They were at nursery for the first year perfectly fine

INT: Mmm

L: (.) at the start of the second year his (..) erm (..) key worker one to one the person that dealt with him

INT: Yeah

L: At nursery

INT: Yeah

L: Erm (.) she left (.) erm well she went on sick

INT: Right

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INT: Yeah

N: So it sort of like so (.) that t-term between October and Christmas it was (.) lots of children struggle at that (.) in that point in the year

INT: Mmm

N: And we were very much like (.) he was a child that needs support at this time so we were putting things in place to be able to help him to get through these transitions (.) but he was sort of pushing a bit further than the other children

INT: Yeah

N: But I think the dramatic change in him happened after Christmas

INT: Right

N: Erm and what happened at Christmas is that teacher that he'd been with (.) that he didn't particularly gel with (.) or we didn't think he particularly gelled with

INT: Mmm

N: Because that teacher didn't particularly gel with the class (.) she left

INT: Right

N: At Christmas (.) and a new teacher who is (.) very nurturing (.) very lovely but (.) very petite (.) joined after Sept-er after January

INT: Mmm

N: I'd been constant through so I'd I'd been there part time in September right the way through the year

INT: Ok

N: (.) so I was still a constant

INT: Yeah

N: The TA was still a constant (.) and the only thing we can think of that changed (.) was the change in teacher

INT: Right

N: Erm in the other teacher

INT: Mmm

N: So for three days a week a th-the new teacher started (.) who (.) EYFS specialist (.) erm (.) very very nurturing

INT: Mmm

N: Very lovely (.) you know she's (.) she's a phenomenal reception teacher (..) but from that point his behaviour changed

INT: Right ok

N: Erm (.) and started changing quite dramatically

INT: Mmm

N: Erm (.) now he had his birthday then I can't remember when his birthday was (.) I don't know (.) do you know his birthday?

INT: Oh off the top ((in overlap)) of my head I can't remember

N: ((in overlap)) was it February

INT: No sorry

N: No

INT: Not off the top of my head

N: I can't remember when his birthday was (.) but it (.) it was round about his birthday which was about the same time

INT: Yeah

N: So it was round about his birthday (.) it was round about Christmas at sort of like the the January time

INT: Mmm

N: That behaviour started dramatically changing

INT: Right ok

N: Erm

INT: So

N: So again ((in overlap)) that's probably there

INT: ((in overlap)) mmm yeah

N: Its probably Christmas

INT: Christmas ok

N: Yeah Christmas was probably (.) a big one (.) erm (.) and his behaviour from that point (.) it was becoming more and more (.) aggressive with the way he was pushing (.) so (.) it started off by being (.) we'd ask him to come and do something (.) as you do with all the children

INT: Mmm mm

N: And (.) we'd start off with the no's (.) which you get with (.) quite a few children

INT: Yeah

INT: Mmm the teachers were rude to you were they?

C: Yeah

INT: Really

C: Yeah (.) I made good friends there

INT: Yeah

C: I'm still friends with them now

INT: That's good (..) do you still get to see them now

C: No I just play with them (..) on Xbox

INT: Oh ok (…) still get to see them (..) ok

C: And I can't remember what happens in year four and then I got excluded

INT: And then you got excluded yeah sorry (…) so what was it like in year four then?

C: Year four?

INT: Yeah

C: Didn't really like it

INT: You didn't like it

C: No

INT: Do you remember why?

C: ((pause)) well (.) except for the teachers and that was it

INT: Yeah except the teachers

C: Mhmm

INT: What sort of things would the teachers do that you didn't like?

C: (..) they'd lock me in the classroom for no reason and they wouldn't let me go toilet or anything

INT: Really?

C: No

INT: That can't have been nice at all (..) ok ((pause)) mmm (..) ok

C: And year five (…) erm (.) I was in half days at this school

INT: Yeah

C: (…) I liked it a lot more than year four

INT: Did you

C: Yeah

INT: Why was that?

C: (…) dunno why (..) because it was (..) alright and way smaller than this (.) year four

INT: Ah (..) ok

C: And I like smaller schools

INT: Do you?

C: Yeah

INT: Why do you think that is?

C: (..) easier to get to places

INT: Ok (..) so you mean there's less to walk around? (.) right

C: Yeah

INT: Yeah

C: So you don't have to walk all the way like (.) there's loads of stairs you don't have to walk all the way down stairs (.) just to go to a different classroom there's lots of stairs in that school

INT: Ah in your old school?

C: Yeah

INT: Oh I see

C: (..) and then year six ((pause)) fine

INT: Its going fine

C: Yep

INT: That's good (..) ((in overlap)) what

C: ((in overlap) and

INT: Yeah go on sorry

C: Year six is fine

INT: Mhhm (.) yeah

C: And dunno what the future's gonna be

INT: What's going well about year six at the moment?

C: The school's better

INT: Mmm

Appendix R

Examples of Completed Three-Dimensional Frameworks

(Numbers in brackets refer to line numbers in the original transcript)

Excerpt of Laura's Three-Dimensional Framework

Interaction		Continuity			Situation
Personal	*Social*	*Past*	*Present*	*Future*	*Context*
I'd known since he was born there was something different (88)		[child] started nursery absolutely perfect (86) 'From the age of nine months he was destructive' (90) 'He would climb inside the cabinets and suddenly the doors would fall off… He'd unscrew them with his fingers' (92,93) 'He had an obsession of climbing so he'd always been on the windowsill' (97,99)			Nursery/Early years

	'Lovable…so lovable' (115,117) 'Just a little but of a monkey…a cheeky monkey not naughty' (119,121)	'He was really advanced with walking and stuff' (103) 'He was allergic to his wee and poo being on his skin so he chose not to have a nappy on' (105,107) 'From the moment he had no nappy on he was off. Dancing climbing on the tv units dancing at the tele all sorts' (109,111) 'He was just always on the go' (113)			Early years 'It all started about nine months when he started the climbing' (101)
'I always knew there was something from birth anyway…but didn't know what' (156,158)	'His best friend is ten weeks older than him to the day… she's a little girl and they idolise each other' (123,125)	'At the start of the second year his key worker…she left' (131,136)			Starting Nursery

'Well not from birth but as soon as he could do everything' (160)	'They were at nursery for the first year perfectly fine' (129) 'He was always headset' (141) 'You know like he was obsessed with building destruction making things or climbing just generally loving it' (141-145) 'They were thinking long along the lines of Autism' (154) 'If they asked him to choose his name he would just pick anybody random' (177)	'A girl that was on maternity leave came back his behaviour started to deteriorate' (138,139) 'His behaviour started to deteriorate…at first I didn't think nothing of it' (147,149) 'The nursery he was at was like do you mind if we do tests put him forward' (151,152) 'He wouldn't put pen to paper he never sat and coloured… I'd put paints down colourings down anything sticky balls paper…wasn't interested' (162-168) 'Push it away' (172) 'Run off throw it anything like that' (174)			

Excerpt of Natalie and Lisa's Three-Dimensional Framework

Interaction		Continuity			Situation
Personal	*Social*	*Past*	*Present*	*Future*	*Context*
'I think the dramatic change in him happened after Christmas' (214) I was still a constant (227) 'The only thing we can think of that changed was the change in teacher' (229,230)	Class teacher didn't gel well with the class and left (219) The new class teacher started who is 'very nurturing very lovely but very petite' (221) 'she's a phenomenal reception teacher' (237)	It was felt that [child] didn't get on well with his previous class teacher (216) Natalie had been sharing the class since September ((224) From the point that the new class teacher started his behaviour changed dramatically (238, 240)			After Christmas

| | | Quite a few children will say 'no' when asked to do something (267) | Behaviour changed dramatically . 'It was becoming more and more aggressive with the way he was pushing' (263-265)

They would ask him to do something and he would say no (265)

'We started with doing the 'now and next' (270)

His behaviour escalated to verbal aggression to begin with and then he started pushing adults away (273, 275, 276, 281)

'There was a lot of throwing items as well' (283) | | | January/Dramatic changes in behaviour/ escalation in behaviour |

Excerpt of Connor's Three-Dimensional Framework

Interaction		Continuity			Situation
<mark>*Personal*</mark>	<mark>*Social*</mark>	<mark>*Past*</mark>	<mark>*Present*</mark>	<mark>*Future*</mark>	<mark>*Context*</mark>
		'I made good friends there' (133)			Year 4
		'And I can't remember what happens in year four and then I got excluded' (139)			
		'Didn't really like it' (143) because of 'the teachers and that was it' (147)			
		'They'd lock me in the classroom for no reason and they wouldn't let me go toilet or anything' (151,152)			

'And I like smaller schools' (164) 'easier to get to places' (168) 'So you don't have to walk all the way like there's loads of stairs you don't have to walk all the way down stairs' (172,173)		'I was in half days at this school' (156) 'I liked it a lot more than year four' (158) because it was alright and way smaller than year four' (162) 'Just to go to a different classroom there's lots of stairs in that school' (173)			Year 5
			fine' (178) 'Year six is fine' (184) 'The school's better' (188) 'The teachers are better' (190)	'Dunno what the future's gonna be' (186)	Year 6

Appendix S

Examples Illustrating the Process of Creating Storied Narratives from Interim Narratives

(Numbers in brackets refer to line numbers in the original transcript)

Excerpt from Jennifer's Interim Narrative

Interim Narrative	*Storied Narrative*
It Started From Preschool	***It Started From Preschool***
'That wasn't an amazing experience for him shall we say' (34)	Jennifer remembers that pre-school wasn't the best experience for CHILD. Within his first year of starting there, all the staff changed over the six-week summer holiday so when CHILD went back in September everybody was new. This really unsettled CHILD and he longer wanted to go there, so he started at a different preschool which was joined to the local school. This had smaller groups and for the year he was there CHILD settled quite well.
'The staff changed all over the six weeks holidays' (37)	
'The staff changed which completely threw him off ' (253)	
'When he went back in the September he wouldn't go in he was having meltdowns etc ' (51)	
'He then went to preschool that was joined to the local school and obviously it was small groups because of the ratios' (257)	
'He was doing quite well…he was only there a year' (259)	
The Challenges of Starting School	***The Challenges of Starting School***
'We had issues from word go starting full time school of internal exclusions ' (65-67)	There were issues from the word 'Go' when CHILD started school full time. Reception wasn't too bad but Year 1 was particularly challenging for CHILD and this soon became evident in his behaviours.
'Reception year was not quite so challenging for him ' (269)	
'Year one was very challenging' (271)	CHILD's teachers were very good and gave him rewards or put things in place that were

'His behaviour started year one like really being evident at school' (284)	just for him. Writing has always been an issue for CHILD and Jennifer remembers that CHILD would only write if he had a particular pencil his teachers had given him.
He refused to do writing so his teachers were very good and he had his own pencil' (272) 'Writing's always been an issue for us with [child] anyway' (282) 'He would write with that' (279, 280)'	
	Jennifer was having regular meetings with the school about CHILD's behaviour being unacceptable. She remembers one occasion where he tried to climb out of the window in the toilets.
'Things were put in place…silly little things that were for him. Rewards for him doing things' (271, 274,277)	
'I was having regular meetings with the school about behaviours showing then' (76-79) 'Being told that he's done X Y Z that's not acceptable' (69)	Jennifer was constantly being called by the school and CHILD received a number of internal exclusions before the fixed term exclusions started. CHILD would be given a day exclusion here and a day exclusion there for things from non-compliance to upturning tables.
'There was a time when had a phone call because he'd thought that it was clever to try and climb out the window of the toilets' (71,72)	
'I'd constantly be getting phone calls…and he'd have internal exclusions ' (86,87)	
'I think his first exclusion as in fixed term exclusion I think that was Year 1' (91)	
'We had a few fixed term a day exclusion here and a day exclusion there ' (286)	
'He would throw things across the classroom… non-compliance…meltdown and he would upturn tables' (297) 'Physical stuff ' (301)	

Gregg

Interim Narrative	Storied Narrative
Good Beginnings	*Good Beginnings*
'It was good at the start' (54) Gregg met his girlfriend at this school (569) 'It was really good that school was' (599) 'It was kind of good' (97) 'It was just fine and stuff and everything' (99)	Gregg's story starts with Nursery. Things at nursery started well at first, especially because Gregg met his girlfriend there. Looking back, he thought it was a really good school. Moving to Primary School was a new start and it was kind of good; things were fine.
Primary School	*Primary School*
'It looks like a house but then there's a little playground as well' (173) 'It's very big' (180) There was a huge library (402) 'There wasn't that many classes' (188) Gregg liked the playground (274) Gregg described the school playground to be small (173) He drew a bridge and there were 'long skinny poles' you swing from and a balance beam (276,278,296). 'It was really fun in the classroom… it was so colourful and stuff'(420,424)	Gregg remembers what his primary school looked like well. It was very big and had a huge library, but there weren't many classes. Gregg liked the playground. It was small but it had a long climbing frame. Being in the classroom was fun because they were so colourful, but some of the children would say things to Gregg which made him angry. One day, he got so angry that he threw a chair at one of them. It would also get so noisy that he didn't want to be there anymore. It was really, really bad.

'Some of the kids just were just like you be something you be something' (256)	
'I got angry and just like picked up a chair and throwed it one of them (the other children)' (259	
'I don't wanna be in that school' (238) 'It's really noisy in there ' (240)	
Then second school was really really bad' (601)	

Hazel

Interim Narrative	*Storied Narrative*
Experiencing Domestic Abuse	***Experiencing Domestic Abuse***
'I met [child's father] the same year that my mum died' (991)	Hazel met Child's father, NAME, the year her mother passed away. She thinks this could be part of the reason why she stayed with Child's Father for fifteen years, and what made it so difficult to leave.
'Now I think that's why I stuck with it for fifteen years because it was just that whole time' (998,1001)	
'It wasn't long after you know it all sort of started (1030,1031)	It wasn't long after Hazel and Child's Father moved in together that it all started. Hazel was physically and emotionally abused, yet it became one of those things that just happened, and Hazel got used to it over time.
'It just became sort of like a thing that you just…just happened …you just got used to it' (1033-1037)	
'There's certain things that you remember and certain things you forget until you're having a conversation' (1041,1042)	There are some things Hazel thinks she has forgotten until they come up in conversation with her friends. She knows she shouldn't laugh but some of it was over such silly things, like when she decided to cook some eggs for a salad. However, there were also many times that were really bad. Hazel remembers being strangled, beaten and dragged along the floor. When Hazel fell

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'You know it would be silly things I mean I shouldn't laugh' (1039)	pregnant, Child's Father didn't want her to keep the baby but she refused to terminate the pregnancy.
'And they're like 'Oh my god do you remember that?' (1044) 'He's like 'They're my eggs you don't have my eggs!' (1060)	Things didn't improve when Hazel fell pregnant and there were times when she was afraid something terrible could have happened to her and the baby. Hazel's memory of Child's first night at home is tainted by what Child's Father did to her and she wishes it wasn't there.
'There's been some real real bad ones (1077,1078) 'You know he strangled me til I passed out' (1080) 'This was all before the children so when I fell pregnant with [child] he didn't want me to have the baby' (1082-1085) 'He was really bad when I when I was pregnant with [child] really bad ' (1119-1122)	Hazel says she has been broken many times, but her nature is to laugh everything off. This drives her sister mad but it's the way Hazel manages what she has been through. If she didn't find ways to laugh about it, there used to be a time where she probably wouldn't have been able to walk out of the front door. There are still times when Hazel finds it hard to talk about the past and can become tearful, but that happens less now. Hazel's sister despises Child's Father, yet, bizarrely, Hazel doesn't feel anything towards him now, not even hatred; there is just nothing.
'I used to think one day something's gonna ..' (1137,1139) 'It didn't improve…he was awful awful when [child] was born ' (1140,1144) 'That's a big memory of [child]'s first night at home' (1185) 'It's not really a huge thing but it's the memory from and it shouldn't be there ' (1192-1196) 'It's not light hearted my sister goes mad at me cause she's like 'You really annoy' me	Hazel knows that Child is likely to have witnessed some of the things that went on at home and that they will have impacted him somehow. Her sister thinks the children should know what their father has done, but Hazel worries about the affect this could have on them, especially when they are still so young. Hazel doesn't feel ready to tell her children yet, but she knows there will come a time when it will need to be said, and she will need to find the right way to say it.

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she says because you kind of make light of it ' (1075,1076,1077)	
'I've been ((laughter)) broken many times' (1785)	
'My nature is to laugh everything off yeah it's probably not the healthiest way' (1787,1788)	
'It does affect me I do burst into tears at times… I try not to its less now sometimes when I'm talking about it I can feel myself going' (1789-1792)	
'It's just how I manage it' (1822)	
'Cause I probably wouldn't be able to go out that door and put one foot in front of the other if I didn't' (1829,1830)	
'That would be silly to say that he'd never witnessed it…because he was the eldest…that would obviously play a part' (62,63, 67)	
'We'd be silly to think that…I think that would be significant ' (88,92)	
'You know my sister will say 'Well they should know !' (1295)	
'There is gonna come a point where its gonna have to be said but just not yet hopefully ' (1290,1292)	

I was just trying to bide time really cause I didn't know how to answer him (1286,1287) 'The answer will have to be given but its how how you answer it and how much information they …there's certain things that they never need to know as far as I'm concerned… it won't do them any favours to know these things ' (1318,1325,1329) She probably hates him more than I do I don't actually hate him I just have there's nothing I don't feel anything…it's bizarre ' (1299-1302)	
Separation 'I'm tryna think of a period when it all sort of started really… it would probably coincide when me and his dad parting for the last time ' (44-49) 'Cause I had tried it many times…many times didn't succeed' (1750,1752) 'As soon as I heard him or or seen him I'd just be like right ok lets go back' (1752,1753) 'It was only me and [child] at one point we were leaving we were doing it and we'd gone to the [women's refuge]' (1799,1800) 'I should have stayed away then… but then obviously I wouldn't have had [first brother] and [second brother] so ' (1861,1863)	***Separation*** When Hazel thinks back to the point at which Child's behaviour changed, it was probably around the same time that her and Child's Father separated for the last time. Hazel had made many attempts to leave Child's Father before, but none had succeeded. She remembers one time, just before Child turned one, when they stayed in a women's refuge for a period of time. Looking back, Hazel can see that was the time she should have stayed away, but if she had done, she wouldn't have had Child's brothers. Hazel believes everything happens for a reason. When Hazel and Child's Father did finally separate, it was a well-executed mission which took a lot of preparation. However, it was a very difficult time for Child. Hazel always reassured him that he didn't have to worry about wanting to see his dad, because of course he still loved his dad. Yet Child felt torn between Hazel and Child's Father and

'Everything happens for a reason doesn't it' (1865)	didn't want to upset anybody. He couldn't cope with it.
It was 'Quick quick get the locksmith!' (1739) 'They were all out at school and nursery and it was like he's gone to work right locksmith' (1743,1744)	Child struggled the most when it came to dropping him off at Child's Father's. Hazel just wanted to see the children off safely but Child's Father would always come out and this used to panic Child. He'd plead with his dad just to go inside.
It was it was a very well executed mission (1748)	
'It kind of shook him up' (319)	Child was very anxious during the separation whereas his brothers seemed less bothered by it. Hazel wonders if this is because they didn't witness things at home to the same extent that Child did. The hardest thing for Child was that it wasn't a quick separation; it went on for months, with Child's Father coming to the house or trying to contact them every day. It was a very stressful and unsettling period for everyone, particularly Child.
'He was very torn between making sure that I'm ok' (323)	
'He didn't ever want to go against anybody ' (325,326)	
'He couldn't cope with that' (332)	
'As much as I used to explain you don't have to you know he's your dad you love your dad I'm your mum you love your mum its fine' (328,329)	
'What he struggled most with I think was the drop offs and pick ups' (349)	
'I'd try and just drop them off and see them go in… he'd come over to the car ' (351,352, 354)	
'[child] used to get panicked…'Just go in the house dad just go in the house dad ' (356,358)	

'He used to get all stressed about that' (360)	
'So that whole period was quite hard for him' (362,364)	
'The other two really didn't bother… whereas [child] was very anxious with it all' (370) 'I always put that down to they didn't really know as much of the history' (378,379)	
I think that was that was the biggest part of it for him… that constant cause it went on for months…every day every day (1572-1577)	
'Because it wasn't just a quick right yep…it was long' (1606-1612)	
'This is too much its just too much …he's hounding them an all on the Xbox he's off his rocker (1692,1697)	

Appendix T

Examples of Identifying Shared Storylines in the 'Stanzas' of Storied Narratives

Analysis of Stanzas in Gregg and Connor's Storied Narratives

Gregg

Stanza: Good Beginnings	Things started well at nursery but got worse because of noise/too many children (1)	Really good nursery (1)	Positive start primary school (kind of good/fine) (1)	Significant relationship in early years (girlfriend) (5)				
Stanza: Primary School	Physical attributes of school (2)	Outdoor space in primary school (2)	Noise	Anger (8)	Other children influencing behaviour/making angry (5)	Externalising behaviour (Venom) (8)		
Stanza: Too much noise	Throwing objects because of anger	Noise started in nursery (1)	Teacher's shouting (5)	Escape (3)	Overwhelmed by noise (3)	Other people didn't notice they were making things worse (5)	Internalising (crazy) (8)	Chasing (5)	Getting away (3)
Stanza: Trapped	Trapped/unable to escape (3)	Trapped (3)	Prisoner (3)					
Stanza: Hiding from criminals	Teachers were doing bad things/bad people (criminals) (5)	Smarter than teachers	Hiding	Running away (3)				
Stanza: Escape Plans	Escape (3)	Planning escape (3)	Being caught (3)	Super power (8)	Seeking home/safety (4)			
Stanza: Unhelpful teachers	Unhelpful teachers (5)	Trapped (3)	Chased (3)	Wanting to be caught (5)	Noise/wanting teachers to be quiet (5)			
Stanza: The Future	Doesn't want to go back to old school (7)	No homework (6)	Looking forward to be an adult (no school) (7)					

Connor

Stanza: Early School Memories	Forgotten a lot prior to Year 4 (when bad memories more prominent)	Good memories of before Year 4 (1)	School/nursery being close to home/safety (4)	Loved nursery experience (1)	Enjoyed primary school when started (1)	Memory of outdoor space in previous school (2)	Being outdoors significant memory (2)	
Stanza: The Good and Bad of Year 4	School close to home (4)	Good friends (5)	Teachers rude (5)	Teachers unfair (5)	Trapped (3)	Negative memories of staff (5)	Lack of memory about exclusion	Positive move to alternative provision (6)
Stanza: A Better School	Better friendships (5)	Smaller school (6)	Caring teachers (5)	Fun activities (6)				
Stanza: The Future	Relationships with family (5)	School close to home (4)	Aspirations for secondary school (7)					

Colour Codes for Shared Storylines in Pupils' Narratives					
Positive Start to Nursery and Primary School	Lack of memory prior to when things went badly	Acceptance of current situation	Teacher's not treating them kindly/caring	Aspirations for the future	Permanent exclusion
Home	Escape	Other people impacting behaviour	Being trapped by teachers	Being persued/chased	Describing self
Positive relationships with friends/teachers	Noise	Things started well but got worse	Postitives of alternative provision	Hiding	

Shared Storylines Grouped into Corresponding Narrative Themes

Narrative Theme	Key
Beginnings	1
Primary School Environment	2
Trapped	3
The Safety of Home	4
Relationships	5
The Alternative Provision	6
The Future	7
Portrayal of Self	8

Excerpt from Analysis of Stanzas in Laura's Storied Narrative

Laura					
Stanza: Early Development	Positive attributes of child	Child not naughty	Destructive	Climbing	Always on the go	Knew there was something different from young age
Stanza: Nursery	Nursery started perfectly	Child had good friendship	Change in staff before deterioration in behaviour	Deterioration in behaviour not concerning at first	Escalation in behaviour over time	Autism suspected
Stanza: Starting School	School not deterred by exclusion	Good start to school	Optimism from school	School supported from start	Behaviour was unpredictable/didn't understand trigger to behaviour	Behaviour different at home
Stanza: Laura's Health	Significant event for Laura	Unexpected event	Significnat event for child	Child wanted to know Laura was	Reason for child to stay at home	Event impacted child's motivation to go to school
Stanza: Signs for Help Were Misunderstood	Professionals didn't understand Laura's perspective	People not considering her perspectives	Professionals didn't understand child like she did	Blamed for child's behaviour by professional	Teacher's didn't understand what behaviours were communicating	School didn't share full information with Child's behaviour at school/sharing of information
Stanza: Staff's Lack of Knowledge and Training in SEN	School didn't put right support in place	Teacher's didn't notice the effects of their behaviours	Teacher's lack of understanding of their own behaviour and impact this had on child	Chasing	Teachers were asking child to do things they knew would trigger behaviours	Lack of resources and training in school to deal with his behaviour
Stanza: Trying to Understand Where it All Comes From	Out of control	Trying to understand behaviour	Child doesn't know what to do	Child has explanation of behaviour	Child has predisposition for something which is triggered by events in past	Child described in past as naughty by nursery
Stanza: Changes	Inconsistency in staffing/1:1 support	Going home regulalry	Not staying in school for long	Reduced timetable	Other children were scared	Different approaches were tried
Stanza: The Permanent Exclusion	Trapped	Chased	Lack of communication with school when PEX happened	Lack of guidance and support regarding how to teach child	New tutor	Avoidance of work
Stanza: Not Knowing What To Do	Didn't know what to do	Education system difficult to understand as a first time parent	Lack of communicationof information after exclusion	How am I meant to know?	Lack of guidance after PEX about what would happen to child/education	Embarassed
Alternative Provision and Their Support	Worry about the journey to the alternative provision	Child felt normal there/not just naughty	Rapport with child important/reassured Laura	Child was meeting adults expectations eg, following rules and working	Calmer	Settled

Excerpt from Analysis of Stanzas in Natalie and Lisa's Storied Narrative

	Natalie and Lisa						
Stanza: Pre-school and Preparation	Wanting to understand child's needs so they could support Billy in the right way when he started school	Behaviour may have been contextual/circumstantial - potential explanations for behaviours	Preconcieved ideas about Billy from nursery	Home life chaotic - potential explanation for behaviorurs	Cooperation with parents from start/advice giving	Feeling prepared to support child before he started school	
Stanza: Positive Beginning	Positive start to school	Billy didn't match their preconceived ideas	They had expectations for things to be worse	Normal/no different to other children	Billy maybe felt more settled than he previously had		
Stanza: Noticing Changes in Behaviour	Began noticing small changes in behaviour	Still normal behaviours	Remained manageable for the adults	Noticing some differences compared to other	Beginnning to push boundaries	Anticipation that things might get worse (bubbling)	Support in place not helping as expected
Stanza: Significant Turning Point	Dramatic changes in behaviour	Significant change in staff (class teacher) coincided with behaviours changing	Not responding to strategies like other children/different to other children	More aggression	Escalation in behaviour		
Stanza: Escalation of Behaviour	Escalation of behaviour	Writing a trigger for behaviour	Behaviours frightening for staff and pupils	Different to other children (strength)	Unpredictability of behaviour - they felt unable to control Billy	Not able to understand what he was trying to communicate	
Stanza: Specialist Support and Guidance	Escalation to specialist support	Billy needed more specialist support than what they could offer in school	Support in school not working/not right for Billy	Professional advice	Behaviourist specialist knowledge	EP involvement	Billy given different work to other children
Stanza: Trying to Understand	Felt like they didn't understand his needs	Trying to understand reason for behaviour	Felt it could have been parenting at first - their thinking changed	Academic work a trigger	Billy couldn't control his behaviour	Billy was having to fight against something inside himself (demons)	There was something inside of Billy that couldn't see/understand
Stanza: Keeping Everyone Safe	Trying to keep pupils safe	Attacks against staff	Running around school	Causing destruction/forceful	Teachers defenseless	Scary	They could anticipate escalation in behaviours

Colour Codes for Shared Storylines in Adults' Narratives			
Positive Beginnings	Chasing, Containing and Restraining	Not Knowing What To Do and Feeling Helpless	Diagnoses and Labels
Exploring Explanations for Behaviour (include writing/academic work as a trigger)	Staff Unable to Manage Behaviour	The Frustration of Not Being Listened To	The Permanent Exclusion
The Emotional Journey	Lack of Support and Guidance During the Process of Permanent Exclusion	Significant Past Events in Parents Lives	Noticing Small Changes in Behaviour
The Alternative Provision Was a Positive Move	Differentiated and 1:1 Support	The Opportunities and Worries Associated with EHCPs	The Child Underneath the Behaviours
The Future	Escalation of Behaviour (regularity, physically aggressive behaviours, running)	Significant Events Associated With Changes in Behaviour	The Wider Impact on The Family
The Experience of Revisiting The Past			