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**Life on the edge: the role played by school in the lives of
young people from a rural community in the South
West of England**

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**Thank you to everyone who has supported and travelled with me on this
journey.**

For Mark, Pete and Tom

Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary, is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be deeply moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling for all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrels heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity

From Middlemarch by George Eliot
1994 (1872), Penguin Books, London p. 189

Life on the edge: the role played by school in the lives of young people from a rural community in the South West of England.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Part 1: Context

This research is about schools and inclusion and the experiences of young people. It is a case study based in and around a rural secondary school in the West Country. Using a range of data collection tools, the study investigates the role school plays in the lives of young people in an isolated rural community called Morton. Insights gathered from the young people have been used to scrutinise the systems, policy and practice of the secondary school. The data explore the connections the young people have in school and offers insight into how disconnection arises.

Janine

Through my work as a Link Tutor in the locality working with young people of secondary school age who do not go to school, I became aware of students who appeared to be separating and disconnecting from their secondary school. One of these, in Morton, was Janine. She was a very active member of the Morton Youth Club and when I first met her, she had just represented the Youth Club on a visit with their local MP to the Houses of Parliament. She was involved in a number of local issues, including improvements to the conditions on the school bus and was nominated for the Borough Mayor's award for her services to the community (Youth Issues Group meeting 1-3-2007 and Parish Councillor 29-6-2007). At school, Janine was as a regular truant and labelled a general 'no-hoper' (Youth worker 15-1-2008). The difference in Janine's levels of

engagement at school and in Morton was remarkable and hearing her story triggered the crystallisation of my research plans.

The research project

This research sets out to investigate the connections young people make with and within their school so as to further understanding of the inclusion and exclusion of school students. The research aims to explore the role school plays in the lives of young people by exploring the motivations that the young people from Morton have to overcome exclusionary barriers and attend school. The study asks what aspects of school life contribute to the exclusion or inclusion of these students.

The research was driven by a desire to develop an understanding of the connections young people make (or not) with school, to begin to develop understandings of how schools can better serve their students. It is a critical engagement with social justice and investigates why injustices and inequalities are produced, reproduced and sustained in schools. Many people working alongside the researcher in this project are seeking change of one kind and engagement in a process of consciousness raising (Lather, 1994). Mutual engagement in change (Lather, 1986) is a good place for the development of critical thinking and civic courage (Ball, 1994).

The focus is on the voices and experiences of young people who attend school and engage with the central systems and structures in school, with a particular

emphasis on 'the exclusionary nature of their rules, structures and systems' (Allan, 2005 p. 288). The young people who contributed to the project come from Morton, an isolated deprived rural community, where access to services is a particular problem. Their secondary school, in the town nine miles away, is their most significantly publicly funded resource. If they do not attend school they become disconnected from this resource and its associated services. The geographical and social context focuses attention on the role the secondary school plays in the lives of the young people.

Qualitative data were primarily used, collected through a case study with the researcher embedded in the school and study community. School attendance data were collected and analysed in the pilot phase of the research. Data were collected via interviews with young people, school staff and people in Morton together with a wide range of documentary and observational evidence collected in Morton and at the school. The data generated has been analysed primarily for content. Although systematic discourse analysis has not been carried out, a 'sensitivity' to discourse (Willig, 1999) has been maintained throughout, with 'ephemeral' discourse regularly recorded in a research diary.

The approach was informed by grounded theory interpreted from a social justice perspective (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). The methodology was designed to 'turn up the volume' (Clough, 2002 p. 67) on quiet voices and so the research is based on empirical evidence in an effort to avoid being overwhelmed by the 'grand narrative'.

The researcher

Coffey (1999) asks that the researcher is positively present throughout the research and researchers must identify themselves as part of the world they know (Ballard, 1995). Ballard requires researchers to write stories about themselves as part of their reports so they become available for public scrutiny.

My story

Apart from my work as a secondary Link Tutor, I also work at a local University. I attended state primary and secondary schools, including the secondary school that is the subject of this research. At the time, the school was remarkable in its commitment to the (then) relatively new concept of comprehensive education and this experience has had a significant effect on my own expectation of and aspirations for secondary schooling.

I work in the 'borderlands' (Giroux, 2005) as a 'border crosser' (p. 25). I work 'on the edge' of a number of professional jobs, existing at the boundaries: on the edge of schools, families and communities. My work is a complex situation where I have a multitude of roles (Castells, 1997). As a worker in the borderlands, there is a sense of being 'in-between', a position embraced by post modernism (Armstrong, 2000; Griffiths, 1998; Mirza, 1995). These spaces are between different groups of people, ideologies or practices. By being neither 'in' nor 'out' of either, I can be both insider and outsider (Merton, 1972).

My voice is heard throughout this report, relaying to the reader my construction of the case under study. I have opted for a report in the third person, as an attempt to turn down the volume of this voice so that others may be heard more clearly.

Voices

This is a case study collecting data from a range of sources using a range of methods from a school and a feeder community. Context, particularly the social and political (Fielding, 1997), is critical to the interpretation of case study data. In this study, the context is presented in increasingly detailed layers. The geography locates the research community and school physically and socio-economically. In addition, contributions from the people who inhabit those spaces provide greater detail about the lived experience of Morton and the secondary school. Set into this geographical and human context, the focus is on the voices of the young people from Morton who contribute significantly to the understanding of the role school plays in their lives. Their insights are unique and powerful from their position of 'being between', between school and Morton, straddling the two worlds. The young people offer a way to make familiar surroundings 'strange' to the researcher.

When recording people's lives (objectification), these individuals are subjected to the 'regime of power' (Foucault, 1982) as the writer exerts power over them. The hope is to minimise the indignity of speaking for others and the imposition of meaning (Lather, 1991) on their words, whilst acknowledging that it is

ultimately the researcher's interpretation that is recorded. This is not a work of 'voice' in the sense that the people are 'subjects' actively involved in development of the project (Gunter and Thompson, 2007). They were clearly 'objects', although as sensitively listened to as possible. In ethical work the privilege of speaking should give way to the act of hearing (Jones, 1998). People's narratives can offer escape from the dominating power of the researcher, although there are risks that 'the demand for narrative can become part of a renewal of colonizing power' (Allan, 1999a p. 113) and research becomes little more than voyeurism by dominant groups (Jones, 1998). There are also risks with focusing the study on a 'marginalised' community.

View from the edge: marginalisation

The young people central to this project are marginalised, coming from a community isolated geographically, socially and economically. There are advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with research of marginalised groups. Apple (1990) argues that seeing things from the standpoint of those with the least power can be beneficial to researchers looking to raise consciousness, offering a way to subvert traditional hierarchies (Foucault, 1988). Observations made at the margins of a social system, 'provides critical feedback to policy makers' (Glenny and Roaf, 2008 p. 2). The risk is that the research can do further damage (Bines, 1995) or that the researcher's actions will confirm or even promote separation between groups.

However, risk gives the chance to break out of the cycle of certainty (Lather, 1994), in this case the certainty is that this community will continue to face disadvantage unless risks are taken. Skrtic (1991) encourages brave thinking and action in order to emancipate one's self from the 'machine bureaucracy' and Fulcher (1995) asserts that research must be political if it is to counter dominant readings. The risks are inevitable; it is a political piece of work.

A discourse of separation

Intensely negative, labelling, separating discourses exist in and around the village of Morton and the secondary school.

In Morton the discourse was generally negative about such things as housing, the landlord, services, schools, young people, older residents, local businesses and the weather. Here are a few examples:

The cops are there most nights in the car park.

(Marty, student from Morton, interview 18-1-2007)

The people in it [Morton] aren't exactly good

(Jo, student from Morton, interview 25-1-2007)

The local council have dumped quite a few problem families at Morton.

(Jill Carter, Morton parent, interview 8-5-2007)

I compare it to my work in an inner city school.

(Morton primary school head teacher, interview 15-5-2007)

There is also a negative discourse about Morton, for example in the local press.

Mike, one of the students from Morton reports:

[It] said in the paper that there were like in Morton, like youths up to like three o'clock drunk, disorderly, smashing the buildings and stuff.

(Mike, student from Morton, interview 13-6-2007)

In the secondary school there was a less explicit but equally detectable negative discourse about Morton: the young people, their families and the local community. For example, when asked whether a student's home location affected the way a student was perceived in school, the senior Teaching Assistant replied:

It shouldn't do, although you may get the situation, like with the Morton ones, where things are different.

(Fran Matthews, interview 8-5-2007)

Discourse focuses the way texts and talk constructs the identities and experiences of people (Allan, 1999a) playing an important part in anchoring

spatial organisations in cultural practice (Armstrong, 2000), keeping things in their place. Foucault (1982) says the key to understanding how society is ordered is to study how human beings are made subjects through discourse and practices, making them into human beings of a particular kind: female, poor, young, gay. Language constructs differences, promotes the use of labels by construction of others and so inherently promotes difference, alienation. Many have written on the role labelling has to play in the production of 'others' (e.g. Armstrong, 2000; Booth, 1995; Corbett, 1996). The use of labels both creates and confirms public identities and assumptions about people. Labelling results in the production of stereotypes, allowing the 'other' to be firmly fixed elsewhere.

Boundaries and connections

The anchoring of cultural practice through labelling leads to boundaries and separateness. Giroux (2005) argues that thinking in terms of borders allows critical engagement in the struggle over these territories and spaces. It is here that the distance and connectedness among individuals groups and places can shrink or grow. The borders of our diverse identities, subjectivities, experiences and communities connect us more than they separate us. How these connections are theorised as forces of tension, domination and emancipatory possibilities, has proved useful in the framing of the themes emerging from this study's data.

The project is a study of the connections through relationships within a school community. The concept of schools as communities is complex and contested (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007; Fielding, 1999). The term community is used here to mean all the students and adults who inhabit the physical space of the school. Relationships are defined by the nature of the human connections between the parties involved and are at the heart of understanding and developing inclusion in a school (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007). The writing of John Macmurray and Michael Fielding will be used to develop some possibilities for the future of inclusion and schooling, 'creating openings for debate' (Allan, 2005 p. 290).

Part 2: Geography: Place Matters

As the impact of globalization and climate change intensify, with significant implications for particular places, the spatial aspects of achieving prosperous and cohesive communities become(s) increasingly important.

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007)

Introduction to Morton

Morton is an isolated village: 'such a remote out place' (Jo, student from Morton, interview 25-1-2007); 'people are never meant to have lived here' (John Seccombe, Morton resident, interview 7-12-2007). Morton is a large compact village, centred on a cross roads with a few outlying farms, nine miles away from the nearest town, Riversville. It is clearly a 'community of place' (Delanty, 2003) set in a rural location of wild beauty which may be called 'idyllic' by tourists or romantic novelists. Morton resident, John Seccombe gives his view:

[In the past Morton was] a place for industry, getting stuff, doing dirty things, not a place for living. So now it is not a good place to live either. There are problems with high rainfall and cold, it gets into the buildings that get wet and stay wet, so are hard to look after. So they get in a bad way,

tenants do not look after them, so property all gets bad and looks bad.

(Notes from interview, 7-12-2007).

Morton is no rural idyll (Bunce, 1994; Cloke, 2003). A countywide audit in 2006, showed Morton to be a deprived community as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (ODPM/NRU, 2004), access to services being a particular problem. Here is a summary:

Morton Area Profile: Key Issues

- Unemployment is above county average
- Level of youth unemployment is significantly higher than county and national average
- Employment relies heavily on primary major employer, hotels, catering and agriculture
- The ward ranked in the most deprived 25% of wards in the country as measured by the Multiple Index of Deprivation 2000 (this situation is changed in the MID of 2004 – see note 1).
- % of population with no qualifications is significantly higher than county average
- % of lone parent households is significantly higher than county average
- % of people not in good health is above county average

- level of owner occupation below county average.
- % rented accommodation from housing association/
registered social landlord significantly higher than county
average
- Key Stage 2 results well below county average in 2002,
significantly improved in 2003 (see note 2)
- % of household with no car below average for county and
England

(Corporate Information Services, South West County Council
2006)

Note 1 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation were reviewed in 2004 and adjustments made to indicator parameters. Using the 2004 indices, Morton was not in the lowest 25% of wards.

Note 2 As the primary school is very small, (number on roll 2008/9, 47), the number of students doing Key Stage 2 SATs is correspondingly small, so variations in results can be extremely large.

The community is undergoing a programme of 'Neighbourhood Renewal' (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2005), a programme of community regeneration coordinated by a group convened by the local authority (the Local Strategic partnership, LSP). This requires joint working with various services serving the community, health, education, social services and the police. These

programmes are the result of sustained government policy which has had as its aim:

To improve the quality of life of people in the most deprived areas by tackling poor job prospects, high crime levels, educational underachievement, poor health and problems with housing and the local environment, to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live.

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007)

The government sees schools as having a central role to play in the process of neighbourhood renewal (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2005), where they are viewed as being 'transformative', making a difference in young people's lives (DfES, 2006; Home Office, 2004).

The young people of Morton go to secondary school in the market town of Riversville, the regional administrative centre. It is, on the whole, a successful place with a high number of affluent households. There are generally low levels of unemployment (Mosaic profile, July 2007. See Appendix 2 for details).

The number of students from Morton with poor attendance is significantly higher than the average for their secondary school. In a rural location like this, where the secondary school is miles from the community, students who fail to attend school become disconnected from the other services and opportunities associated with the school and the town.

Introduction to the secondary school: Riversville College

Riversville is much larger than the average secondary school and serves an extensive area of rural County. Almost half of the students travel to and from the college by bus. Since 1996 it has been a specialist language college. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is low, about half the national figure, and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. However, the percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national figure. Most students are from a White British heritage and the percentage of young people from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English is much lower than that found nationally. Overall, students' attainment on entry to the college is slightly above the national average. The college operates a small learning support unit partly funded by the local authority.

(OFSTED report 6-2-2009)

Riversville College is identified as a community college serving an extensive rural area, with an almost entirely white, English speaking population. What is notable about the school is its size. The school is managed as one whole school on one site, spread over 10 hectares, with a student population, (at July 2009), of nearly 1800.

Although this work is a 'case study' the rural, social and geographical context of this research, the secondary school, the market town of Riversville and the rural isolation and associated deprivation of Morton are not unique to this region. They are recorded across rural areas of the UK (Shucksmith, 2000). This work contributes to the growing body of work on 'inclusion' and 'place'.

Contents of the report

Chapter 2 of this report details the conceptual location of the project. In Chapter 3, the approach taken in the research is explained, including the researcher's role and the tools used in the methodology and analysis. Selections and interpretations of the data collected appear in Chapter 4 and are discussed in Chapter 5. The report concludes with chapter 6 which looks at what can be learnt from the study and how it might inform practice and policy development in schools and the wider educational community.

Chapter 2: Main conceptual themes

Inclusion and exclusion in an educational context

A brief history of inclusion in schools

The notion of inclusive education did not appear out of thin air. Its roots are deep and widely spread-reaching back into aspirations and community values embodied in the ideal of comprehensive education in the UK and to notions of civil rights and equity from emancipatory struggles.

(Barton and Armstrong, 2007 p. 5).

This project is about schools and inclusion. Julie Allan argues the words inclusion and education are ‘oxymoronic’ (Allan, 2008 p. 10), a conjunction of contradictory terms. A brief look at the history of inclusion and schooling in the UK will provide a useful starting point from which to examine inclusion and education in its contemporary context and to look more closely at some of the contradictions.

School attendance has been free and compulsory since the Education Act (England and Wales) 1944. The period from 1944 until the end of the 1970s was an ‘optimistic’ one and ‘education policy was largely based on a social democratic consensus that governments should regulate and resource education to achieve redistributive justice and provide equal opportunity’ (Tomlinson, 2005 p. 3), although it soon became clear that mass-schooling did not benefit

everyone equally. The development of comprehensive schools in the 1960s appeared to herald a vision of the future where schooling no longer perpetuated the divisions and inequalities of society (Benn and Simon, 1972). Alongside these 'mainstream' schools was a separate 'special' school system. This separation or segregation of children into 'mainstream' and 'special' schools was 'simultaneously hailed and condemned...as both a means of achieving equal education opportunities and a perpetuator of injustice in education' (Florian, 2007 p. 7).

It is in this arena that the concept of integration, followed by inclusion, was generated. The existence of segregated, special schools was increasingly seen as perpetuating the exclusion of vulnerable children from the mainstream entitlements allowed to others (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007). The movement to educate all children together in the new comprehensive schools, integrating children from special schools into mainstream schools, grew (UPIAS, 1981). Arguments in support of integration were framed within a rights discourse (Dessent, 1987; Freeman, 1987) and became aligned to various 'rights' organisations, such as those working to improve gender, race and disability equality and in the United States it was linked to anti war and civil rights movements (Charlton, 1998). A particularly significant development came from disability rights organisations such as the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). Disability was reframed by various writers and activists, many of whom were themselves disabled (e.g. Abberley, 1987; Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1983). This reframing has subsequently become

known as the 'social model' of disability (Oliver, 1983). Disability was reconceived as being no longer a personal problem but one of equal rights and opportunities and hence a public issue.

In 1975, the secretaries of state for England, Wales and Scotland, set up a commission, chaired by Mary Warnock, whose brief was 'to review educational provision...for children and young people handicapped by disabilities of body or mind' (DES, 1978 p. 1). The resulting Warnock report (DES, 1978) and its embodiment in the Education Act 1981, advocated the reframing of disability as 'needs', which, it was hoped, would bring an end to categorisation. However, need became a new way to label (Allan, 1999b).

A significant restructuring of UK public services began in the 1970s which shifted the emphasis of government policy from redistribution, to one directed by market forces and competition (Tomlinson, 2005). This restructuring of public services, led to a period of increasing social and economic inequality and particular groups became particularly disadvantaged (Hutton, 1995; Smith and Noble, 1995). By the end of the 1990s there was considerable concern about the 'social exclusion' of certain groups of people from society and this concern was to dominate public policy from the New Labour Government, (Blair, 1998). Optimistic feelings about education had been replaced by what some commentators identified as fear and anxiety (Tomlinson, 2005). In this new climate, questions about the necessity and desirability of educating children in segregated settings took on a new urgency.

In 1989, the United Nations published the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child'. The principles of this convention became embodied in the Children Act 1989, which came into force in England and Wales in 1991, giving children new rights, including the right to be heard (Article 12), and the government new responsibilities. A second international publication, 'The Salamanca World Statement', issued by UNESCO in 1994 states:

Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and the enjoyment and exercise of human rights. Within the field of education this is reflected in the development of strategies that seek to bring about a genuine equalization of opportunity.

(UNESCO, 1994 p. 11).

The concept of inclusion is understood here to be embedded in a human rights agenda that demands access to and equity in education (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004). Rights and participation were seen as key principles in the early activities of the New Labour Government of 1997 such as in the development of the Green paper, 'Excellence for all children: meeting special educational needs' (DfEE, 1997). The shape these rights and equity take in education is more problematic (Florian, 2008).

Defining the concept of inclusion

Inclusion is a complex and contested concept (Sheehy, 2005). It has been identified as a process of overcoming barriers to participation (Booth, 1995), as a response to diversity, as the experience of listening to unfamiliar voices (Barton, 1996), as a 'struggle' (Barton, 1997) and as 'an aspiration' (Slee, 2001). In schools, it is also linked to 'attendance' (e.g. the National Attendance Strategy 2008/9 DCSF, 2008). Others see it as a protest, a call for radical change (Graham and Slee, 2008). The concept has changed its emphasis over time, moving from a focus on personal troubles to one of public issues (Wright Mills, 1959).

Many have been critical of the use of the concept. Slee (1998), among others, said 'inclusion is a euphemism for assimilation' (p. 110), and 'no more than a new language for functionalism' (p. 130). Others argue that since inclusion is a concept that is 'messy and ill defined' (Corbett, 1996), inclusion creates a climate of confusion and contradiction for education (Stronach and Morris, 1994). With an absence of clarity on the nature and purpose of inclusion, some (e.g. Allan, 2008), question whether or not researchers and practitioners would be able to recognise it when they see it.

In an attempt to identify inclusion, some writers have developed systematic frameworks. Ainscow and his colleagues (Ainscow et al., 2006) have developed six ways of conceptualising inclusion and education as a result of

their work with the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). The six approaches they identify are:

- Inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorised as having ‘special educational needs’
- Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion
- Inclusion in relation to groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion
- Inclusion as developing the ‘school for all’
- Inclusion as ‘education for all’.
- Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society

This typology acknowledges the continued domination of the policy and practice of inclusion by the special needs legacy which is still clearly evident in current literature (e.g. Grace and Gravestock, 2009). It also indicates two different conceptions of exclusion: exclusion as a disciplinary act and as social separation. In contemporary government education policy documents, ‘inclusion’ and ‘special educational needs’ generally appear together and the government’s lack of clarity on these issues was highlighted in the report from The House of Commons – Education and Skills Committee (2006). Continued use of ‘categorisation’ is another legacy of the ‘special educational needs’ heritage. For example, guidance to OFSTED inspectors identifies eight groups of young people for inspectors to pay particular attention to in schools, including minority ethnic and faith groups, pupils with special educational needs and ‘looked after’ children (OFSTED, 2000 p. 4). The use of categories

continues the patronage of 'deficit' models of young people and limits changes to understanding of how these categories construct and contribute to the difficulties young people experience in schools (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Another constraint on the term inclusion is its inextricable link to exclusion (Ainscow et al., 1999; Ballard, 2003). Seeing inclusion as the antithesis of exclusion restricts exploration of the processes which are common to all those in specific groups experiencing exclusion and 'making visible and deconstructing the centre from which all exclusions derive' (Graham and Slee 2008 p. 279). The formalisation of exclusion through the 1986 Education Act and its use of the term 'exclusion' to refer to the temporary or permanent exclusion of young people from school for disciplinary reasons, linked exclusion, inclusion and bad behaviour. With the continuing presence of special educational provision outside mainstream schools, exclusion remains 'a permanent feature of the educational landscape in co-existence with discourse of inclusion' (Slee, 2001 p. 172). Levitas (1998), in writing about social exclusion, warns that there is a danger with the use of the term as it can appear that exclusion is essentially a peripheral problem, existing at the boundaries of a society. Concentrating on exclusion can detract from consideration of the structural inequalities of the system and therefore hinder challenges to exclusionary social systems and structures.

Inclusion can also be conceptualised as a 'school for all'. In 1948, the United Nations declaration of universal Human Rights identified education as a

fundamental right for all children. Education for young people in the UK aged 5 to 16 is conceived primarily as happening in schools. Thomas and O'Hanlon (2002), along with many others, argue for inclusion to be conceived as an extension of the comprehensive schools ideal. 'Here we will be less concerned with 'special educational needs' and more concerned with systems which strive for diversity and equity' (Thomas and O'Hanlon, 2002, p. vii), with young people educated together in one place. The recent development of 'diversity' in schooling in the UK, as a result of government commitment to market policies of competition and choice, has led to a number of different types of schools, (e.g. specialist schools, faith schools and Academies) which are founded on notions of choice rather than equity (Ball, 2003, Gewirtz et al., 1995, Potts, 2003). In this climate of specialisation, selection and competition, the concept of inclusion as promotion of the 'school for all' is put under great tension, (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007), and challenges the structures and systems of contemporary schooling. Conceiving of inclusion as 'education for all', rather than 'school for all', might perhaps give opportunities to rethink 'delivery' of education, with schools as one among a number of means for developing education, so that it is genuinely concerned with participation of all in a community (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Inclusion, with its conceptual bedrock of rights, equality and social justice, was designed to challenge deep social systems and structures (Slee, 1999) rather than be moulded by them. Perhaps there is a need to go further back, 'to make explicit and interrogate the normative assumptions that lead us to think we can

even talk of including' (Graham and Slee, 2008 p. 281). To expose the normative assumptions requires an interrogation of the structures and systems that act as barriers to participation, that divide and separate, the divisive practices (Foucault, 1978) operating in organisations and institutions such as schools.

Education and the 'production of strangers'

The exclusion and 'othering' of young people through the forms and processes of education is endemic (Slee, 2001 p. 172). As Bauman explains:

All societies produce strangers, but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own inimitable way ... While drawing its borders and charting its cognitive, aesthetic and moral maps, it cannot but gestate people who conceal borderlines deemed crucial to its orderly and/or meaningful life and are thus charged with causing the discomfort experienced as the most painful and least bearable.

(Bauman, 1997 p. 17)

Foucault argues that we define ourselves and others with reference to markers, patterns which are proposed, suggested, and imposed by an individual's culture, society and social group (Foucault, 1987a). These coercive markers (Allan, 1999a p. 46) identify and label individuals. When education happens in systems such as schools, othering becomes systematised. The inclusion project in

education sits within this context. Schools are inherently exclusionary, separating places. The more that they have been called upon to include the masses, the more they have developed the technologies of exclusion and containment (Blyth and Milner, 1996; Slee, 1995).

Allan (2008) calls for an engagement between educators and philosophers to help open up the thinking on inclusion and education, employing the 'philosophers of difference', Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, to envisage a 'reworking of the rigid, striated and hierarchical educational spaces' in schools. 'Relationships in these rigid spaces are defined by authority and control and expressed through order words' (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987 p. 22). 'Smoothing out spaces' is about the 'shifting of power and the way in which people can engage with these spaces' (Allan, 2008 p. 55).

Derrida's concept of deconstruction is seen as key to reframing the inclusion project because of its role in disrupting decidability (Allan, 2008 p. 71) and subverting the 'ideology of expertism' (Troyna and Vincent, 1996 p. 142).

Allan (2008) argues that deconstruction is about justice, or rather it is justice because it always 'has to do with the other' (Derrida, 1997 p. 17), and 'injustice arises...through a kind of forgetfulness of the other'. Derrida also offers a way of holding contradictory ideas together in the same thought using the 'aporia', such as: schools are expected to be for everyone but there are exclusion procedures; and schools are expected to raise standards but also include everyone.

Giroux (2005), challenges us to look at the divisions set up in places like schools, the fences between different groups of people, and the boundaries around territories, spaces, groups which produce 'strangers' (Bauman, 1997). Peters (1993) identifies the cultural borders set up in classrooms and schools, where 'systems of implicit and deeply internalized attitudes towards others' (p. 23) are created and maintained. Allan (1999a) identifies the systems that 'patrol' these borders, and Armstrong, (2000), explores the idea of spatial separateness leading to exclusion, in a study of the spatial boundaries in schools.

Stronach, (1996), challenges the use of 'boundary metaphors' with their inevitable dichotomy of being 'in' or 'out'. He uses Bhaba's (1994) notion of 'in-between-ness', using a metaphor of folds in fabrics to show how relations change, are fluid, and offer places for 'spaces in between', which he uses in the deconstructing of difference. Mirza (1995), Griffiths (1998) and Haraway (1991) see these spaces as offering good places for possibilities for researchers.

Foucault (1973) argues that structures and disciplinary regimes, (such as those found in schools), frame the way that individual differences are thought about and constructed, for example the patient, mad man and criminal (Foucault, 1991). Differences are made and exaggerated by systems, such as school administration practices and other day to day activities in an institution like a school, what Foucault (1991) calls the 'insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties, small acts of cunning, calculated methods, techniques, 'sciences' that

permit fabrication of the disciplinary individual' (p. 308). Foucault challenges researchers to look at the minutiae of school practice, to examine what the Fabians call the technical 'gas and air' practices at the very heart of schools (Thomas and Loxley, 2001). Our response to difference says something about the humanity of the systems we create and operate (Foucault, 1991).

Critics of Foucault have argued that his work is pessimistic (Rorty, 1990), denies agency (Hughes, 2005) and does little to offer opportunity for action. Yet Foucault's later work on ethics looks at the possibilities offered when individuals work on themselves to achieve new kinds of existence (Allan, 2008), and see themselves as the main source of transformation, thus creating opportunities for agency. Ballard (2003) and Slee (2001), among others, also see the process of inclusion as beginning with ourselves, framing inclusion as an ethical project (Allan, 2005).

Schools and inclusion

An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievement, attitudes and well being of every young person matters. (OFSTED, 2000 p. 2)

It is assumed (and controlled by legislation), that young people of statutory school age must have to be educated and this is conceived primarily as attendance at school. One of the Children's Plan delivery goals for 2011 is to have school attendance across all schools above 95% (DCSF, 2007a). However, writers have argued that schools never were designed for everyone (e.g.

Darling-Hammond, 1997; Slee, 2003; Thomas and Loxley, 2001), and must, 'in order to function, position some individuals as failures' (Allan, 2008 p. 10), hence the oxymoron of inclusion and schooling. The intrinsic tension between the two concepts requires thoughtful interrogation.

Revisiting the writing of Dewey, we are reminded that schools can be places where we can learn to live well together (Dewey, 1899). To achieve this, schools must embrace democratic community life and respect human dignity (Dewey, 1903), a significant challenge in a capitalist society with its inequities of power and wealth (Apple and Teitelbach, 2001). In a collection of writing by children in 1967, about 'The school that I'd like', they gave a 'highly intelligent plea for a new order in schools' (Blisshen, 1969 p. 9) a call recently made anew by Tim Brighouse following his time as leader of the school challenge programmes in London and Birmingham (Brighouse, 2009).

The Nuffield Review of 14–19 education and training (Pring et al. 2009), similarly challenges the core purposes of education. In Scotland there has been a national debate on schools in the 21st Century, launched by the Scottish Executive Education Department in 2002 (Munn et al., 2004), and also an inquiry into the purposes of education by the Scottish Parliament (Pirrie and Lowden, 2004). Both investigations highlighted the importance of 'opening up the debate' to fundamental questions, acknowledging that 'educationalists have been so ensnared in their own communities of practice that they no longer ask such questions' (Pirrie and Lowden, 2004 p. 522).

Through the asking of fundamental questions, assumptions of contemporary education policy can be exposed and interrogated, leading to inquiry into the core purposes of education. New Labour education policy suggests that education is ‘the crucible within which social advancement is formed and where an opportunity society is promoted’ (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008 p. 20). Here, there is an underlying assumption that schools can be transformative, providing opportunities to improve the life chances for individuals. This assumption is clearly evident across current education policy. For example ‘The Children’s Plan’ (DCSF, 2007a) records a commitment to support families from disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to overcome current levels of educational underachievement. The report of the Panel for Fair Access to the Professions (2009) reveals continued commitment to the idea that ‘schooling can be transformative’ stating that ‘in a knowledge based economy, education is the motor that drives social mobility’ (p. 62). Contemporary government social policy is informed by the belief that a well educated work force is vital for the economy (Ball, 2008).

Schools and communities

One strategy used to put government social policy into action is the community regeneration initiative, ‘Neighbourhood Renewal’, financed by the ‘New Deal for Communities’, and developed by the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) launched in 2001. The village of Morton, the subject of this study is a community currently engaging with this initiative.

The concept of community is contested and conceived in many ways (Galster, 2001; Lupton, 2003). The Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives use the concept of community as a physical place, the geographical locality in which a school is placed. It is this meaning of community that is used primarily in this report: Morton and Riversville are both considered communities in that they are distinct geographical locations.

In these regeneration schemes, schooling is seen as one of the responses to the problems of social disadvantage:

Raising education standards and developing educational opportunities is essential to help break the cycle of deprivation in our poorest communities, (<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.aspx?id=647> accessed 9-2-08).

An initial evaluation of the New Deal for Community (NDC) partnerships by Sheffield Hallam University (NRU/Sheffield Hallam University, 2005), reports that the NDC process has had little effect on 'educational standards', (measured using Key Stage 2 and 4 results), and that there is a very tenuous link between NDC communities and the education of their young people of secondary school age, (particularly in rural areas), as they leave their communities to attend school.

The secondary school in Riversville serves a large rural area, including Morton. It is interesting to note that neither the village primary school in Morton, nor the secondary school, agreed to any involvement in Morton's 'Neighbourhood Renewal' programme, suggesting disengagement between the schools and the local community. Research on the role of schools in area regeneration initiatives has shown wide ranging levels of engagement (Cummings and Dyson, 2007): schools driving multi agency initiatives and others where the schools are out of the loop completely (Kerr, 2009).

Some critics argue that considering schools as places for transformation is fruitless as 'schools cannot compensate for society' (Bernstein, 1970). In terms of social exclusion, these 'compensatory strategies', such as Neighbourhood Renewal schemes, detract from a consideration of the structural inequalities of the system by focusing on the problems at the edge (Levitas, 1998). Some argue that only political and economic reform will change anything in society and that schools can only hope to maintain the status quo (Halsey et al., 1997).

For others, schooling is seen as fundamentally redistributive, a mechanism for ensuring, (or attempting to ensure), that all children get reasonable access to education (Brighouse, 2006). Thus education and inclusion are assumed to play an important role in a proper functioning society, with benefits exemplified by improvements in the economy, social cohesion and enhanced life chances for individuals (Ball, 2008; Raffo and Gunter, 2008; Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008; Tomlinson, 2005). From this functionalist perspective, the inability of an

individual (or community) to 'succeed' in the system is blamed on their inability to overcome their circumstances: their class, socio-economic status, gender and culture. A major problem with this perspective for inclusion is that it assumes societal norms that are equitable, shared and advantageous to all (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008).

A recent series of government publications acknowledges that such equitable 'sharing' does not happen. The report 'Breaking the Link' (DCSF, 2009a), focuses on the link between poverty and a subsequent lack of success at school. The findings show that economic and social deprivation has a negative impact on young people's educational attainment, and future economic 'success'. Other recent publications including 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003) and the 'Children's Plan' (DCSF, 2007a) also recognise the relationship between education standards and the realities of children's lives outside school, context does matter.

If schools are for the delivery of redistribution of resources (Benjamin, 2002) and equity of opportunity (Raffo and Gunter, 2008), schools bear the responsibility for 'standards', whatever the nature of the students who attend. This responsibility puts a huge and some would argue unrealistic strain on schools and their leaders. Raffo and Gunter (2008) call for a more socially critical perspective on schools and inclusion which recognises the limits schools have to compensate for society. This shift to a critical social perspective necessitates considering schools in the context of their communities.

The nature of the link between schools and their local communities has recently changed, as seen in this case study. With an emphasis on increasing school diversity and promoting choice, schools are managed as if they were competing in the open 'market', and so schools become detached from their immediate communities of place (Brighouse, 2000). Ironically in Morton, there is no complex geography of school recruitment (Crowther et al., 2003) as there are no practical alternatives to Riversville College, so all the students from Morton go to the one secondary school. Despite the school population being primarily local, there is a lack of connection between the community of Morton and Riversville College, which may have an impact on the young people's sense of 'belonging' at school. There does appear to be a problematic relationship with school for a significant number of young people in Morton.

There is 'mounting international evidence... that for an unacceptably large number of young adolescents, schooling is an alienating, bewildering, unsatisfying, unrewarding and damaging process, to the point where many may make an active decision to give up, drift off or drop out altogether' (Smyth, 2006 p. 31). A UNICEF report in 2007 identified young people in the UK as some of the unhappiest in the world's richest countries (UNICEF, 2007) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) has recently requested an Independent Commission be set up to investigate the unhappy state of the UK's children in schools (Garner, 2008). Yet achieving improved well being and happiness for young people is a target of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (DfES, 2003).

However, there is also substantial evidence that young people who do not go to school, (apart from the deliberately home educated), are more at risk than children who do attend regularly (e.g. Youth Justice Board, 2004).

Disengagement from school and associated deterioration in family circumstances are significant risk factors for young people (Prior and Paris, 2005). Governments remain committed to schooling as a universal service but there is clearly a need for change.

Problems with the concept of inclusion in schools

Inclusion as a concept has always been challenged (Vlachou, 2004), but it is clear that the inclusion and education project is now under real strain, (Armstrong et al., 2000; Benjamin, 2002; Dyson, 2001; Fulcher, 1999): ‘even the most avid supporters...stress the hugely diverse and changing nature of the challenge of inclusive education’ (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008 p. 26). Allan (2008) records the ‘territories of failure associated with inclusion: the confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion’ (p. 9).

Mary Warnock has recanted on her own committee’s recommendations declaring that the idea of inclusion in schools should be rethought, (Warnock, 2005). John MacBeath and colleagues, on behalf of the National Union of Teachers, concluded that the current education system made it difficult to implement inclusion (MacBeath et al., 2006). The House of Commons Education and Skills committee on Special Educational Needs report that ‘confusion’ about inclusion in Government is causing confusion in schools,

(House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006). OFSTED (2004) report development towards effective inclusion was hindered by the systematic constraints of mainstream schools. There is evidence from young people (e.g. Gillinson and Green, 2008; Gross, 2001), parents (Shepherd, 2009) and teachers (Macbeath et al. ,2006) of growing anxieties about inclusion in practice.

The social and economic context for inclusion and education has changed significantly. It is argued (e.g. example Ball, 2008; Tomlinson, 2005; Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008), that there has been a significant shift in the way education and its role is viewed by government. There is now a clear commitment to the idea of 'human capital theory', with education seen as primarily a producer of labour and skills, both individually and nationally, with the economic purposes having subsumed the social ones (Ball, 2008).

The economic imperative has resulted in 'schools becoming inducted into a culture of self interest with an increased orientation towards the internal well being of the institution and its members and a shift away from concern with more general social and educational issues within the community' (Ball, 2008 p. 45). Young people and their parents are conceptualised as 'consumers', given 'choice' and the possibility of personalisation through participation (Leadbetter, 2004). Choice, designed to meet the needs of individuals, works against those who do not have access to the choices available to the wider

community (Tomlinson, 2005), such as students in Morton, who only have the one secondary school to choose from, which is Riversville College.

The publication of school league tables in 1992 was presented as a mechanism to raise standards in schools, setting schools against each other, with attainment being the measure of a school's success (Tomlinson, 2005). Unintended effects of this competition and performance maximisation were a significant rise in school exclusions and the resulting setting up of Pupil Referral Units (Ball, 2008), and an increased use of segregated schools (DfES 2007; Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008).

Another unintended consequence is the increasingly obvious inequality along socio-economic and social class lines (e.g. Blanden et al., 2005; Gillbourn and Youdell, 2000; Reay, 2006). Concerns about growing inequalities in income were identified in the mid 1990s. The Youth Cohort Study, begun in 1993, shows increasing inequalities of achievement between social classes (Thompson, 2009). Many argued that policies based on human capital theory, with economic success as the primary goal, would not serve everyone well (e.g. Gillbourn and Youdell, 2000; Kennedy, 1997; Riddell et al., 1997). More recently, the work of the Sutton Trust has highlighted again the direct link between social class and educational success (Blanden et al., 2005). Many contemporary writers, for example Gillborn and Mirza, (2000), Reay, (2008), Sammons (2008), and Walford, (2008) comment on the failure of contemporary education policy to narrow the gap between educational outcomes.

It is during 'crises' such as these, in inclusion and education, and in the wider world of economics and politics that 'ruptures' can occur, (after Derrida in Allan, 2008). Major changes disturb the status quo, allowing space for shift and change. Foucault defines the perhaps inconceivable space in which limits are transgressed but not erased as an 'unstable space' (Simons, 1995 p. 69), where limits are forced (Allan, 1999b). So the failures with the inclusion project could be seen as transformative, a time of creative possibility. For example, economist and Nobel Peace prize holder, Muhammad Yunus, sees the current global economic crisis as a time of opportunity to build a more equitable world (Yunus, 2009).

A time of crisis leads to the fundamental questioning of assumptions, exposing contradictions and contestations. This research examines the contradictions in schooling and inclusion. The struggle between social structures and individuals is examined through the lens of one small rural community and its local secondary school.

Chapter 3: Carrying out the research.

Introduction

This research project is a qualitative case study, informed by Foucauldian ethics. The village of Morton and the secondary school at Riversville are familiar to the researcher so the research methodology used is designed to make this situation strange, to open up the familiar to alternative ways of seeing (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). It is sometimes assumed that being 'on the inside' offers, as well as ease of access, the ability to project a more meaningful understanding of the culture under study (Merriam et al., 2001). However the lack of 'the new', may result in the researcher ignoring, avoiding or subverting common place or sensitive issues (Hockey, 1993). The research focuses on the voices and experiences of young people from Morton who go to school, thus engaging with the central systems and structures in school that include and exclude, responding to Graham and Slee's (2008) call to make 'visible and deconstruct the centre from which all exclusions derive' (p. 278).

An ethical project

Slee (2001) asks that inclusion starts with ourselves. We all have a responsibility to interrogate the exclusionary pressures in our own worlds. Allan (2005) argues that individuals can then be seen as the 'the main source of transformation' rather than waiting for more substantial change (p. 284). The 'Ethical Project' based on Foucault's conception of ethics offers a 'promising way in which to frame the work that everyone involved in inclusion must do to

understand the(ir) responsibilities (Allan, 2005 p. 283) in the 'struggle' (Barton, 1997 p. 239) for inclusion.

Foucault's framework of ethics focuses on 'the forms of relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes himself an object to be known and on the practices that enable him to have his own mode of being' (Foucault, 1987b p. 30). Ethical work as practice has a 'readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought ... a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental' (Foucault, 1988 p. 132).

There are four elements to Foucault's ethical practice

1. Determination of the ethical substance: identification in one's self of the things that need to be worked on which encourages acknowledgement of the individual's role in creating exclusionary pressures (Allan 2005 p. 288).
2. The mode of subjection: the ways in which an individual lives within the 'rules'. The exclusionary nature of 'rules', structures and systems (Allan, 2005 p. 288) of a secondary school are scrutinised in this research.
3. Self practice or ethical work: the way in which an individual can change the way they live. Key activities in ethical work are deconstruction, criticism and reflexivity (Allan, 2005). Deconstruction helps to subvert the 'ideology of

expertism' (Troyna and Vincent, 1996 p.142) so offers 'ways to throw off familiar ways of thought'. Criticism should produce writing that creates openings rather than closures through certainty (Allan, 2005 p. 290). This research utilises an alternative perspective, to 'make strange' the familiar school, to explore new ways of seeing and being.

4. The ultimate goal of ethical work, Foucault calls the telos. In this context, the telos is social justice, for those subject to the exclusionary forces in and around school.

The ethical project does not have an emancipatory goal or promise of rescue to grounds of certainty (Stronach and Maclure, 1997), freedom or empowerment, so avoiding involvement in patronising emancipatory politics. Instead it offers individual researchers the chance to experience 'the self as agent' (Warren, 1988 p. 138).

Methodology: the journey

The methodology for this research was formulated through an iterative process. The stages of formulation, reflection and reformulation reflect the significant shifts in the researcher's conceptual framework during the project. Viewing this retrospectively, it can be seen as a development through an increasingly complex methodology to a simpler form.

The early stages of the researcher's methodological planning were informed by Foucault who urges researchers to study the 'microphysics of power' (Foucault, 1991 p. 29), the ways in which power operates upon individual bodies in everyday encounters. This concept was sustained throughout the project and pervades all elements of the work.

The work began and ended as a case study. It was initially argued that a 'multi-methods approach' would be most appropriate to gather all kinds of data from as many of the elements of 'the case' as possible, in an attempt to understand what was going on with an awareness operating within this case study community. Foucault's ideas of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' informed this stage of the development of the methodology. A Foucauldian genealogy begins with the premise that the problem is complex, which seemed very appropriate to the project. Tamboukou and Ball (2003) argue that the traditional question of how the researcher breaks down the data and gives it meaning, is no longer valid. 'The question is how she will navigate the multiplicity of meanings surrounding the research and arrive at something that can stand as 'findings'...and write them up' (p.16). A Foucauldian genealogy 'requires patience and a knowledge of details and depends on a vast accumulation of source material' (Foucault, 1986 p.76). As a natural collector and hoarder of information of all kinds this approach resonated with the researcher's own perspectives on life and became a central tenet in the conceptual underpinning of the methodology and lead to an intense period of data collection from a very diverse range of sources.

In his work on 'archaeology' as method, Foucault asks that 'one ought to read everything, study everything, one must have at one's disposal the general archive of a period at a given moment' (Blacker, 1998 p. 263). This 'archive' should include statements from as wide a range of sources as possible – with no difference being made between official and private. There are a number of problems with this approach. There cannot be a complete 'archive' as the researcher cannot avoid making what is in the end, 'an arbitrary selection of historical materials' (Castel, 1994 p. 242) although 'consistency and rigour' in data collection may go some way to overcoming these difficulties (p. 242). It could also be argued that in this kind of study all discourses 'appear equally truthful' (Henriques et al., 1998 p. 109), which may also be problematic.

There are also clearly dangers in producing writing that confirms the view of the world by powerful groups such as the ones the researcher is associated with by default, providing yet more material for classification by the dominant culture in its own academic terms (Mirza, 1997). As the research progressed, it became clear that this was happening. The 'grand narrative' of the Foucauldian methodology was seducing the researcher and overwhelming the other voices. The project was becoming a project about research and the researcher rather than about young people and their school. Mirza would argue that explaining the research to others became an act of confirming the domination of the researcher. The project's role in consciousness raising ceased as it became

something too complex to share with colleagues, friends and others met during the research.

It became clear there was a need to refocus on the researcher as an 'active listener' and learner and this required a simpler, more honest approach. This shift to a less complex methodological approach to deal with the complexity of the case was also important for effective communication of the important findings that were emerging from the data. This period of reflection was significant and led to the decision to refocus on the conceptual framework of the 'ethical project' to underpin methodological decisions. The 'ethical project' sets out to 'turn up the volume' of the voices of the young people and others with whom the project was shared.

Social research like this cannot be considered 'neutral and hygienic' (Oakley, 1981 p. 58), it will always be messy and contested. So the methodology of this research is a 'search for order' (Black-Hawkins, 2001) in this messy, contested territory, to allow quiet voices to be heard.

Qualitative data

This research project is a piece of qualitative research, a tradition of enquiry concerned primarily with meaning and interpretation (Barnes, 1992).

Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 p. 10) and that each stage of a research inquiry is constructed through social processes (Charmaz, 2005). The researcher acknowledges that

they are unable to put their own knowledge of the social world on one side in the vain hope of achieving objectivity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Some argue that the researcher and the researched become one (Coffey, 1999) and that you cannot separate one from the other. The researcher takes the view that it is possible to separate them and that 'the job of 'method' is to 'hold apart' the researcher and her objects' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002 p. 27) so the difference between them can be made explicit.

Case Study

The case under scrutiny in this research consists of a secondary school, Riversville College and one of its feeder village communities, Morton. The purpose of a case study is to probe deeply and analyse multiple phenomena, with a view to establishing generalisations (Cohen and Manion, 1994). It is acknowledged that a single case is a poor basis for generalisations (Yin, 2003) but detailed examination of one setting can be seen as a means of understanding complex human situations and human encounters (Simons, 1980).

There is both inherent strength and weakness here: 'the choice of case study involves buying greater detail...at the cost of being less able to make effective generalisations' (Hammersley, 1992 p. 186). Blumer, (1969 p. 149) called for researchers to 'accept, develop and use the distinctive expression of a particular case in order to detect and study the common'. Case studies traditionally use a range of methods to collect information about the many facets of a particular situation. As with other qualitative study, 'no single method can grasp all the

subtle variations in ongoing human experience ...so a range of interconnected, interpretive methods are used' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 p. 21).

The case studied in this research involves the community of Morton, its inhabitants, particularly the young people, and the secondary school they go to in the nearby town. Haggis (2008) argues that describing a group of people in a case, allows for patterns that transcend individual uniqueness. In this case study the attempt is to maintain the individuality of the participants, respecting their individual contributions, whilst acknowledging that their views will be constructed with and by others, so comparable with others in Morton and importantly with young people in general.

Collecting data: putting together the archive

Data were collected in a number of ways from a wide variety of sources in the school and village. As the methodology had been informed by Foucauldian genealogies and archaeologies, significant amounts of all sorts of data were gathered in the early stages of the research, conceived as the compilation of an archive.

A great deal of documentary data was collected. From Morton this included: local history books, a collection of old newspaper cuttings, parish council meeting minutes, parish newsletters and minutes from local Strategic Partnership and sub-committee meetings. County council and District council reports and socio-economic statistics which included Morton were collected.

From the school documents including OFSTED reports, various policies (eg attendance, inclusion), school prospectus, staff bulletins, newsletters and attendance data were collected.

A wide range of people were interviewed throughout the period of the research. People interviewed from Morton included a Youth worker, Parish councillor, two parents of school aged children, Police officer and the Community safety partnership coordinator. There were also 'casual meetings' with people from Morton and these exchanges were recorded in the research diary. People interviewed who were associated with the school included six students, eight members of staff, the Education Welfare Officer and a school governor.

In addition to the documentary and interview data collections, the researcher attended community meetings such as the Youth Club and Local Strategic Partnership, at which notes were taken. A research diary was kept.

As the data collection continued it became clear that the data derived from interviews with the young people from Morton were of primary importance and are considered the 'key' data. The significant amounts of other data play an important role in locating the research. They are considered to be 'contextual' and situate the key student interview data.

Research diary

A research diary was kept throughout the research period. It was open format and contributed to, frequently but irregularly. It was very much a reflective diary, recording thoughts and feelings in addition to observations. As the diary is so long running it shows the temporal nature (Alaszewski, 2006) of some thoughts and ideas and how these developed or were abandoned as the research proceeded. It was clear that the diary was important in structuring thinking. Entries made during the main writing phase show how reflections recorded in the diary triggered significant written reflection in the report on key events, and on the research process. Notes from the diaries have acted generally as aide memoirs throughout the research period. Entries have been used to ensure accurate reporting of events and personal communication that happened.

Contextual data

School attendance data

School attendance has been used as an indicator of the level of engagement with school by young people. Some attendance data and anecdotal evidence was put together by the local Education Welfare officer (EWO) in preparation for a meeting with the Morton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to determine the number of young people in Morton not attending school regularly. It was clear that the situation was very 'muddy' and this attempt at 'hard data' collection had highlighted the 'mythology' surrounding this group of young people.

Attendance data is collected twice a day in school. Attendance figures for the school are published annually and scrutinised by the school, local Education Authority and OFSTED. It is 'powerful' data and is used in a number of different ways both within and outside the school. Individuals with poor attendance (less than 80%) are recorded and reported to Heads of Year and the Education Welfare Officer. Official statistics such as attendance data can be problematic. It can be argued that these kinds of statistics are more about the structure and priorities of the institution (Foucault, 1980, Squires, 1990) and are not objective at all. Inaccuracies occur in attendance data for many reasons, although not always reliable, the resulting data can be seen as indicative.

In addition to the analysis done by the school system, the data were sorted using postcodes to identify geographical patterns of attendance, care being taken not to identify individual students. Some rudimentary statistical analysis was done to provide a picture of attendance for young people from Morton. The data were then compared to the whole school population. For comparison, data from another feeder village, Downland, which was also causing concern at the school, was similarly analysed. A summary of the statistical analysis can be found below:

Attendance data for Riversville College. A Summary

Academic year	2005–6	2006–7
<u>All students</u>		
% of all students with <80% attendance	12.49	11.90
<u>Students from Morton</u>		
As a % of whole school population	4.28	3.88
% of Morton students with <80% attendance	41.27	33.93
<u>Students from Downland</u>		
As a % of whole school population	9.91	9.83
% of Downland students with <80% attendance	18.49	12.68

Documents

Documents from the school and Morton were collected and used to provide a background against which the study of young people's experiences of schooling could be set. Publicly available school documents were collected for example school policies and prospectus and the OFSTED report, together with 'ephemeral' documents such as newsletters and school bulletins. In Morton, parish magazines and reports on the village or its environs, e.g. The Village Review of 1985, were collected, as well as articles about both the school and Morton published in the local press.

Regional publications produced by the Local Authority such as Regional Development Plans, were also collected, including socio-economic data such as

the 'Mosaic Profiles' which record social and economic factors such as income, housing and access to services. The Mosaic Profile is used in strategic planning work by Local Authorities and calculation of the Multiple Deprivation Index (see Appendix 2 for details of the Mosaic Profile for Morton).

A significant number of meetings in Morton linked to the Neighbourhood Renewal project, were attended, including meetings of the Morton 'Local Strategic Partnership' (LSP). Education was not represented on the LSP as none of the local school leaders and education representatives from the local authority could attend meetings; all sent apologies. Whilst teaching in the Morton community centre, the researcher was asked to represent education on the LSP, a serendipitous opportunity to gather insights into the community and renewal. Meetings of associated sub groups and Youth Issues Group were also attended by the researcher. Some had formal minutes recorded; see Appendix 4 for an example. At others, notes were taken and recorded in the research diary.

Documents are not neutral artefacts, they can be considered to be the results of discretionary practices in the organisations from which they are derived so are not value free. For example, objective measurements of data like income and property ownership in the 'Mosaic profiles' is impossible (Levitas and Guy, 1996, Rose, 1991). As with the school attendance data, these data sources are seen as resources for the research and not as a topic of research in themselves. They are viewed 'suspiciously' (May, 2001), recognising that a detailed analysis would be another research project in itself.

Interviews

In the early stages of the research, the pilot phase, the first interview done with students was semi structured but it became apparent during this interview that there was too much structure and that the researcher's preconceptions were constraining the data (May, 2001). Armstrong (2000) immediately gave up on her plans for interview structure too. It is clear that unstructured interviews are necessary to challenge the 'truths' of official ways of seeing (May, 2001). The amended interview strategy began with asking very broad questions and continued as conversations. Interviews are not 'neutral tools' providing objective data: it is not a neutral exchange (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997, Scheurich, 1995). Those interviewed have been involved in the collaboration and co-construction of the results (Fontana and Frey, 2005), both inherently and more explicitly. The interviewer's prompts in the transcripts evidence the explicit elements of the co-construction in these 'unstructured' interviews. What are not seen in the transcripts are the unspoken visual signals given by those present in the interview, which also acted as prompts.

Interviews with young people from Morton

Central to the research question is the voice of the young people. They are 'between' – they are students in the school and live in the community. They know their school, community and themselves unlike anyone else. As part of this project of consciousness raising, it is vital to take seriously (Giroux, 2005) what is said about their relationship with school and made this public.

The 'pilot phase' began at the Morton Youth Club. The youth workers had asked that the research project be explained to the club members. Several relationships with the young people were already established through Link Tutor associations. The youth worker invited all the young people to a 'focus group' session in a separate room where those who wanted to attend, gave their views about school. Their comments were gathered through informal chatting, whilst aware that only the voices of those prepared to speak in this situation were heard. Awareness of the 'silences' grew as the project continued and an attempt has been made to record these silences in the research diary or at least acknowledge them in some way.

Some students agreed to talk about their experience at school in more detail. These initial interviewees, Jo and Ivor (year 11) and Marty (year 12), were self selected volunteers. All three were engaged in a long running project at the Youth Club with one of the youth workers based on a Youth Service 'empowerment programme'.

This first round of interviews, which took place at school, was considered as a pilot and informed subsequent student interviews. Jo and Ivor were interviewed together on a second occasion and Jo on her own on a third occasion. Each meeting generally began with the relating of a 'significant event' from that day or week in school. Jo also chose to do an audio diary which she recorded at home over a week using the same idea of a 'significant event' to get her report going.

The initial volunteers recommended that some younger Morton students were also interviewed as they thought it would be useful to have their different perspective. They suggested Lenny (year 8) and Ali (year 10) who both agreed to an interview and again these took place in school. It was clear that Lenny was very interested in the research project. He was keen to meet again and he suggested he bring his friend Mike, also from Morton. Meetings have continued over the past three years and Lenny has been a 'key informant' (see Appendix 1 for details of all interviews with young people).

Generally the students needed few prompts to report how things were going for them in school. Many of the researcher's contributions to these conversations were responses to comments made by the students; they reflect the researcher's natural response to the genuine interest in what the young people had to say. Care was taken not to 'lead' the conversation but some times interventions were made to direct the conversation towards further development of the student's ideas and views on school issues. When a decision was made to explicitly prompt during an interview, it was done with careful consideration, aware that data collected by interviews is done so through a process of co-construction by those present.

The students proved to be very willing and illuminating contributors to the project, rather like those Julie Allan reports in her work (Allan, 1999a). At times, the intensity of their commentary on life in school and at home in

Morton seemed overwhelming. Their stories provide great insight into the role school plays in the lives of themselves, their friends and families.

To illustrate the interview process, here are parts of the transcript of the first interview with Lenny. This interview happened after the 'pilot phase' so was less structured than the first interview done with Jo, Ivor and Marty. Lenny began talking about what people in Morton say about secondary school.

C: Cath L: Lenny

L yeah I mean normally when I come back from the bus around the bus stop there's a whole load of people and I say why weren't you in school today and they say I just don't want to go and I ask them why and they say because they just don't like it there. I don't know why but maybe they are nervous or rather like-they- some people say they get treated unfairly by teachers

C right, so what do you think?

L One or two teachers maybe – but I mean most people don't like it because they are like- you miss one day and you'll be behind for the rest of the term that's why they don't come

C so once you've missed one...

L you've got behind with your work and get found out

C so they tend to be around the bus stop when you get home?

L yeah I mean it's a small village so if you do get a bit off you'll be alright that's why they wait at the bus stop – I was trying to get on the bus the other day and this guy came up to me don't go to school today and I said what do you mean? – come and have a day off with me and I said I can't because of my education and I want a good life but he went don't mind I'll get someone else and I saw him at the bus stop where he gets on as and I asked him what did you do and he said nothing so I said why didn't you go to school because it's just normal.

C do you think there are a lot of people doing that?

L well I think people – what they want to do, they walk to the bus and get in Morton or they go on the bus walk into school and then walk straight out.

C really?

L and then go around the town, that's what happens.

Lenny 16-5-2007

The issues raised in this excerpt, truanting from school, poor relationships with teachers and the school bus are recurrent throughout the data. It also illustrates the flow of conversation begun by the young people and developed with responses, questions and contributions by the researcher.

This second excerpt illustrates the use of the 'significant event' question, which is used, mid-way through this interview:

C tell me about the best thing that has happened to you this morning.

L the really good thing that happened to me was – mm I don't know – oh yeah I've arranged with my mates to come down into Riversville and go down (place by the river) cos last time I couldn't get in touch with them so that's good because there's a group of us maybe 6 or 7 plus some other friends so we'll all go to Riversville

C what will you do?

L we'll all go swimming down (place by the river) or play football or rugby or something

C do you swim in the river down there?

L yeah me and my brother are quite strong swimmers – I was quickest my brother isn't quick but he's strong.

Lenny 16-5-2007

Lenny identifies the arranging of a social activity as a good thing that happened to him at school. This too is a recurrent theme in the data. These two excerpts illustrate the approach to verbal questions and prompts taken by the interviewer. They show the researcher initiating conversations with questions

and responding to the student's contributions with expressions of interest and further careful questions, behaving and responding as an 'active listener', at all times. The researcher sensed that quest for data by the researcher had a powerful affect on their behaviour in interviews and there was a need to consciously remind oneself of the need for researchers to listen. Really listen.

Other interviews

A number of different adults were interviewed for this research. The context of the young people's school and community experiences was important. This context, in which the student's experiences of school are set, is presented in increasingly detailed layers. The socioeconomic and geographical context is developed from documentary evidence with a human perspective, the context provided by adults who share the same public space as the young people. These interviewees include adults who live or work in Morton and members of school staff, some of whom the students had identified as people who would 'understand' them. This latter group included a 'Student Support Services' officer, a Learning Mentor and a youth worker. Teaching staff including the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO), the school Principal and Assistant Principal and a form tutor were interviewed. Support staff interviewed included a lunchtime supervisor and teaching assistant. Also interviewed were the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and a school governor. In Morton, people involved in the Neighbourhood Renewal project were interviewed along with parents of secondary school students; a Parish Councillor, priest and a youth worker (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviewees).

A similar interview strategy to that for the interviews held with students was used with the adult interviews. For those associated with the school, the interview began by asking what they saw as their role in the school. For those associated with Morton, the study community, interviews began with a very open question about their link with the secondary school. As the interviews, which were more like 'conversations' continued, a list of prompts was used as a reminder to raise key issues, if they did not come up in the conversation 'naturally'.

Here is an example from Jill Carter. She has lived in Morton all her life and has children both the primary school and secondary school. She is also a lunchtime assistant and more recently, a teaching assistant at the secondary school. Here she talks about the problems in the village:

Yeah, I would say that we probably ... we do have quite a few problem families at Morton, and the local council have dumped quite a few problem families up there over the years, which has upset the balance of the village. I know they've got to live somewhere, that's not a problem, but instead of sort of dotting them around and about, if you concentrate too many in one area, and that's not a snobby attitude either, I don't want to sound like that, but it does upset the balance, because the problem parents, they usually come with quite large families, it doesn't take long for those children to run amok,

and the parents' attitude is just ... I've seen it, I've lived in Morton 20 years and I've seen the result of it. They were doing it 20 years ago. Some of those families have moved out, but they've soon been replaced. But they still ... it has been a bit of a punishment area. Do you know what I mean? You don't pay the rent, or you don't do this or you don't do that, we'll put you in Morton. And it's the one place that people on low incomes don't need to be, 'cos there's no buses hardly and there's nothing to...[support them].

I think it's a bit naughty, I don't think that helps families who are struggling at all, it isolates them further, makes them angry and it's a vicious circle. I've seen it. Even in the local school, even in the primary school now, we've seen quite a big change there with new pupils coming in; some of those pupils from these families, and the whole atmosphere of the school has changed.

I've spoken to quite a few mums who've had children there right from the word go, and my own daughter has started to be bullied, because all the children that she's grown up with, they care about each other, but the new ones coming in, they probably don't mean to but there's not that duty of care, they've not gone through places together and the early reception years, they come in, all these little groups and

dynamics are suddenly different, and it's even had a knock-on effect there, the atmosphere down there has changed.

Jill Carter 8-5-2007

Jill raises the issue of 'problem families' who have been housed by the local authority in Morton, for many years. She mentions the poor public transport, alludes to the lack of facilities and talks of the close-knit nature of the community, leading to problems with the 'newcomers'. This data illustrates the value of adult interview data in providing another perspective on the contextual data.

Data analysis

The data generated by this study has been analysed primarily for content rather than discourse. Discourse analysis can be seen as 'freezing' discourse, operating on bits of dismembered text (Parker, 2004 p. 168), so a sensitivity to discourse (Willig, 1999) has been maintained rather than used a prescribed analytical method.

Content analysis

Analysis of the data was informed by grounded theory. All the interviews were fully transcribed if they had been recorded on audio equipment. Some interviews were recorded as notes. The student interview transcripts were analysed as soon as possible after each interview so that results could inform

future interviews, with the awareness that in grounded theory work, data collection, analysis and the development of theory are iterative.

A content analysis on all the student interviews was done using the strategies of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Each interview transcript and set of interview notes was included in the analysis. The whole transcripts of interviews with the students were coded along with sections of other interviews which dealt directly with issues of school and/or young people. Documents in the archive such as meeting minutes, newspaper reports and policy documents were also analysed for content, if they were found to be relevant to young people or school. Some documents were used solely as sources of information about the context of the study and not coded, for example the County Council's Regeneration programme report.

During the coding part of the analysis, the student interview transcripts acted as a central reference point for the 'constant comparison' process. The documents and notes from other sources were constantly cross referenced and memos were recorded on the student interview transcripts. The codes evolved as the iterative process of data collection and analysis proceeded. The codes were gradually collected together into categories. These categories combined, split and regrouped as the analysis continued and key themes emerged. Data that did not sit comfortably in a category (anomalies), data that indicated dissonance within and between individual responses and data that was not there (silences) were identified. The interviews with others, staff in school and people in Morton

were analysed for content in a similar way but with less detail. The focus was on sections that were directly linked to school and to the experiences of young people in Morton.

The technicalities of this kind of system of data analysis can be seen as privileging the researcher who controls the data by compiling the themes (Atkinson, 1997) and quoting the quotes (Clifford, 1988). The hope is to manage the analysis with dignity and respect for those who were interviewed.

Using grounded theory

A data strategy informed by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was used to ensure research findings are grounded in empirical data but with some reservations, being wary of the approach as advised by Thomas and James (2006). A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds. The analysis results in an interpretation of the processes that construct these worlds. Grounded theory can therefore be used to 'analyse relationships between human agency and social structures and move studies beyond description, while keeping them anchored in their respective empirical worlds' (Charmaz 2005, p. 508). Michele Moore (in Goodley et al., 2004), acknowledges the struggle when deciding to use grounded theory acknowledging that 'familiar' research tools provide 'credibility' which is key in the furthering of social justice enquiry beyond the realm of academic bookshelves. Ideas and recommendations to be presented to the education community can be seen to have emerged from the voices and experiences of

participants and originate in the actuality of every day lives. Selection of a recognised analysis strategy may also be a way of ‘pushing analysis through critical gateways’ (Goodley et al., 2004 p. 158) helped by a strong empirical foundation (Charmaz, 2005), which improves the chance that the research gets through into the wider world to affect positive social change (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). The ‘ethical hangover’ (Lofland and Lofland, 1984), Michele Moore experienced after making such a decision, has also been recognised.

Writers argue that there are some significant problems with this method in social studies. By working within the confines of the data, the analyst can be blinkered, their view restricted by the data (Moore, in Goodley et al., 2004 p. 156). Charmaz acknowledges that there has been significant criticism of grounded theory, with its positivist roots (e.g. Silverman, 2003), but argues that grounded theory has roots in the constructivist Chicago school, and it is this heritage that informs contemporary uses of grounded theory. Grounded theory methods ‘offer rich possibilities for advancing qualitative research in the 21st Century’ (Charmaz 2005 p. 507), generating theory and new perspectives from empirical data. The aim of this research is to unsettle beliefs (Allan, 2008) about the role school plays in young people’s lives, using empirical data to generate new ideas rather than test preconceived theories.

Ethical considerations

The planning and implementing of this research was informed by the British Education Research Association (BERA) ‘Ethical Guidelines for Educational

Research' (revised 2004). The principles underpinning the BERA guidelines are based on an ethic of respect for persons, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research and academic freedom. There are often conflicts between these and various positions are taken as to what is of most importance (Christians, 2005). The research has been approached by putting human relations (Macmurray, 1961) at the centre. Researchers involving young people must comply with articles 3 and 12 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child which require that the best interests of children (and young people) must be the primary consideration and that children who are capable of forming their own views should be able to express their views freely. This principle is at the core of this piece of research and is applied throughout.

In a case study, the reader has to rely on the integrity of the researcher to select and present the evidence fairly (Roberts, 1996 p. 147) which requires the researcher to 'be present', honest and open. Throughout the report, reflections on the dilemmas and inconsistencies encountered have been recorded and a 'faithful' account of both the contributions from research participants and researcher has been attempted.

All participants in this research were fully informed about the project and the role they would play before their written consent to take part was gained. Each of the participants received a 'Project information sheet' which explained how data would be used, stored and reported. Each participant has been offered a summary of the report. It was also agreed that the researcher would arrange a

gathering of the students who took part to discuss the project after its completion and possibilities for future work together. Before interviews began, a check was made of participant's understanding of the process that were to be involved in, including their right to withdraw at any time.

Pseudonyms have been used throughout, for places and individuals (Delamont, 2002) and care has been taken in placing the school and study community within the reporting. Ball (1981) paid very particular attention to removing all identifying geographical references to his study school and advocates the active misleading of the reader if necessary. As it is the relative geographical location of the school and study community that is important in this research, detail of geographical locations has been removed.

Meetings with the young people happened in school. This decision was made for a number of reasons. The roles of teacher and researcher could become blurred and it was decided that in school, the teacher/researcher role was more transparent. School was a safe and straightforward place to meet with young people although this decision did place the young people and the teacher/researcher in familiar roles (acknowledging that this has difficulties and complexities). The meetings were held in a room that was used by visitors to the school such as Link Tutors and counsellors. It did not feel like a classroom and it was hoped that conversations with the students did not feel like lessons. It would be interesting to find out what they did think of the process. In addition to the written consent from the young people themselves, informed written

consent was obtained from a parent or carer. No material incentives were offered, although the young people did get permission to be out of a lesson for the interview and did seem to get personal satisfaction from the focus group and subsequent interviews. They seemed to enjoy the opportunity to talk and this warrants further investigation.

Interviews were generally recorded and the transcribed. A number of adult interviewees asked not to be recorded and group events were not recorded, here notes were taken. Where recordings were done, these were transcribed verbatim, where the quality of the recording allowed. Pauses, giggles, yawns and other non-verbal aural recordings were noted on the transcripts where possible. Minor editing has been done, for example removal of some 'umms and errs', to help with clarity for the reader.

There were a number of encounters with people and events during the research for which written consent was not obtained. There were chance conversations and experiences which were recorded in the research diary. At many of these encounters, there was an opportunity to explain the research which was both informing and part of the 'consciousness raising' exercise. When these contributions have been used in the report, it has been noted.

Researchers must recognise the right to privacy for participants in research. This is problematic for case study work (Mahbub, 2008) where it is difficult to guarantee anonymity for the case location and inhabitants. The reporting of data

has been sensitively handled to avoid any risk of providing ammunition for the critics of schools, their leaders and communities (Thrupp, 2001). Dialogue with the school Principal has been maintained, who was aware of the research activities. A series of unfortunate events happened at the school during the period of the research, which put a great deal of extra pressure on the Principal. Information about the research activities has continued to be sent but there were no opportunities to discuss them.

There are important ethical considerations in analysing the data and reporting the research. It is acknowledged that the analysis and the reporting have been done by the researcher. Informal meetings with participants in the research have continued but participants have not been involved in the data analysis or report writing. This is for practical reasons but also moral ones. This is not an attempt to do participatory research, acknowledging the practicalities and theoretical justification for this kind of research are fraught with difficulties. By taking responsibility for the report and its publication, the researcher can manage the content to minimise any risk to individual contributors.

Oliver (1992) asks the researcher to consider whether it is ethical that the researchers benefit from the experience of the research, leaving the researched subjects just as they were before. Another question is whether or not researchers who do not have disabilities, should research those who do. Len Barton, in the context of disability research, argues that able bodied researchers should accept the power they have and exploit it, whilst asking:

What responsibilities arise from the privileges I have as a result of my social position? How can I use my knowledge and skills to challenge, for example, the forms of oppression disabled people experience? Does my writing and speaking reproduce a system of domination or challenge that system?

(Barton and Clough, 1995 p. 144)

A similar debate is happening in research on poverty, where the question is whether or not researchers who do not share the social and economic context of those they are researching, have a right to be there. Here there are demands for those in poverty to be heard directly, but acknowledgment that due to the 'collective weakness of people in poverty as a political constituency' there is a continued need for researchers and activists to continue to work as a 'poverty lobby' (Lister, 2002 p. 43). Skrtic (1991) encourages brave thinking and action in order to emancipate one's self from the 'machine bureaucracy' and Fulcher (1995) asserts that research must be political if it is to counter dominant readings.

Chapter 4: Data

Introduction to the young people

This research set out to investigate the role of the school from 'the inside', from the perspective of the young people from Morton who go there. All the young people interviewed in school were regular school attendees. The presence of young people who do not go to school is acknowledged in the report, for example some of the young people who contributed to the session at the Youth Club did not attend school regularly.

Six students were interviewed at length. At the start of the project they were in the following year groups:

Marty: year 12

Jo and Ivor: year 11

Ali: year 10

Lenny and Mike: year 8

All (except for Lenny) have always lived in Morton. The three oldest students left school in July 2007. Informal contact with them has been maintained but interviews have not been continued. Lenny and Mike continue to be in regular contact, through school and community links. Lenny, (and Jo in some respects), became a 'key informant'.

The best way to introduce them is through their own words.

Lenny

Lenny is considered a newcomer to Morton, having moved there six years ago.

My parents did it because we used to get in quite a lot of trouble down [city]. I always used to get in fights and I used to get bullied there.

(Lenny, interview 16-5-07)

Lenny writes and performs songs to describe how he feels about himself and where he lives. Here is the one he wanted recorded in this report. He was happy for slight modifications to be made to make it understandable in written form. He uses his 'stage name', Taze.

I really loved the old days,
All we did was laze,
Life was no maze,
It was in a great phase.

Always on the park wall,
Didn't think at all,
Kicking the same football,
Inside I felt like a fool.

We lived in the park,

Until it got dark,
Now we ain't there,
No one even cares.

They all took a drug
I felt like a mug
It spread like a bug
I just wanted to pull the plug.

All down in the woods
In their hoods,
All down there smoking
They won't stop toking,
I ain't even joking
When eight year olds are smoking

Now is when it pays,
To know the great days,
Back in the old days,
I was never known as Taze.

Lenny, 16-6-2008

Jo

Jo has had a turbulent school career:

It's taken about five years to actually like this school. I still don't like it – they didn't like...they tried their best to kick me out when I was in year nine.

(Jo, interview 25-1-07)

Jo did an audio diary over a week. She took a recorder home and at the end of a school day she recorded how the day had gone for her. She said this recording shows why school is so unfair:

Well, I've just got back from school and it's been kind of a funny day, kind of not, kind of a good day and kind of a bad day. First off, well I'm starting to go out with B, but you really don't need to know that. Err ... and ... well, there was an incident at lunch, because I forgot my dinner money today, and they normally do dinner debts, so I went over to the office and I went in and I said politely, even though I was starving, I said, hi, can I have a dinner debt, please, because I forgot my lunch money. And the woman turned round and said, no, sorry, we don't do them for Year 11s. And I was just like, well, that's not exactly fair. And she just turned round and said, yes, but you're leaving in like 3 months. And I was just

like, yeah, but obviously I'm going to pay it back and you can chase me up, it's not like it's like a month away. And by the time I would have got quite grouchy, because I don't really like the woman, I've got into little arguments with her before. But she started writing it anyway and she asked my name and she was just like, oh, J, oh, oh, did you get to period one this morning, and I was just like, no, I was with CG [the researcher] in the MAP room. And she was like, mmm, all right then, I'll check up on that. And I was just like go ahead. And then she accused me of being with somebody called CN. I was like, well, that's not really fair for blaming me for something I haven't done. So she finished writing out my slip, she handed it to me, so I obviously just took it, and she said Year 11s should ... but by this time I was already walking out of the door and I just said thank you. But what she was explaining to me was that I'm a Year 11 now, I should remember these things. And I was thinking, well, that's not really fair, because it's not like I do it often. But anyway she called me back out of the lunch line and she took me back into the office and by that time all my mates had seen me and they were just, oh, J, what's happening? And I was like I don't know, I'm kind of getting confused but I'm getting in trouble for something I haven't really done. And then she was like you're not going anywhere until I let you go. So I just

said, you know what, stuff the fucking dinner and just walked out. It was not even worth the hassle. And then S gave me some money anyway. But she still continued to chase after me, but I got away (laughs). That's the funny thing about it. So, yeah, that was today and we'll check up tomorrow. Thank you.

Jo, audio-diary May 2007

Jo's 'kind of a good day' is linked to seeing her new boyfriend. Her 'kind of a bad day' involves confrontations with staff. Jo says school is unfair.

Ivor

Ivor is a 'serious student', aiming to do A levels. He planned to join the RAF after leaving school. He is a committed member of the Morton Youth Club and saw the work he is doing with the youth worker as very worthwhile.

Well I'm going on a course with Pat [youth worker] and that, with Jo. It's a 3 day course. At the end of it we will have a qualification in that, so when we go for a job we can say ...

Like on New Year's I had to stop a fight between Marty and some random dude in a pub and Marty just never gave up and so I had to get his Dad down but that's because I did the training and that's why I acted because I would not have

exactly.. just stand there and let my mate get pummelled into
like 20,000 pieces by a like 24 year old.

Ivor, interview 25-1-2007

Mike

Mike is a man of few words but his silences 'speak volumes'. Here are two things he did say about himself:

M and I'm on report

C so what's this report for Mike?

M my behaviour

Mike, interview 13-6-2007

M he's in my English-but then again I'm not very bright in
English either so...

Mike, interview 17-7-2007

Mike was on report for the duration of the research.

Ali

Ali does not enjoy school as a place of learning, although it is important to her as a place to be with friends:

Say if you are with a group of people and lets say they want to go a certain area of the school that's out of bounds and you're not doing what they are doing but you are just there – you get

labelled as if you were doing what they were doing if you know what I mean and you get in as much trouble for being there rather than for actually doing it, so that's what really irritates me, because if you're just there and there's no where else and you want to be with your friends, you get in trouble

Ali, interview 7-7-2007

Ali says school is a place that labels you.

The students are constructing their own world views, reporting sections of their life in school in a selected way, from which an interpretation is then constructed by the researcher. Whilst acknowledging the construction that takes place in interviews, 'raw' transcripts are used whenever possible in the following presentation of data.

Emerging themes from the data

School as a social place

When the Morton students first began talking about the reasons they went to school, school was seen to be a place 'for a good education, to get A levels' (Ivor 18-1-2007) and a place to go because 'you have to' (Jo 18-1-2007), but primarily a place to socialise and meet friends. When asked about the good things that happened in school, Lenny said 'I like the people you meet' (16-5-2007), Ali said 'my friends' (7-7-2007), and Marty, now retaking GCSEs in year 12 said 'it's worse when your friends have gone' (18-1-2007). There are very small groups of young people of a similar age in Morton, only six in Lenny and Mike's year group, so secondary school offers the opportunity to meet many others of a similar age.

Here, Mike compares primary school with secondary school:

- C Did you enjoy yourself at primary school?
- M Yes it was fine - you begin to like your school better when there's more people to
- C When there's more people?
- M Yes in this one
- C Oh I see more people in secondary school
- M Yes
- C And that gave you chance to meet different kinds of people?

M Yes it [primary school] was not a very big one really.

There was 43 people there so... there's only 47 now.

Mike, interview 17-7-2007

For Mike, the move to secondary school means more people to meet. The Morton students frequently recorded 'friends' as the most important thing about school. When asked directly about good things that happen in school, these were invariably linked to social activities. Relationships in schools were frequently linked to activities 'outside' school too. Here are Mike and Lenny talking in response to a question about good things that happened to them in school:

C give me an example of something really good that's happened in the last few days

Long pause

L me joining Riversville Raiders [local football team]

M me and him have joined the Raiders

L yeah Steve convinced us into it – he's in our tutor – he's my best mate and he's a good mate to Mike

C so that was a real highlight this week?

M no it was last week

C what about something that happened here in school – think about something nice some one did or an event that you think 'it's good here'

M there isn't one

L I think swimming will be good today – that's always good cos it's like everyone's relaxed and happy and there's no fights.

Lenny and Mike, interview 13-6-2007

It is interesting to note here that the first good thing that was mentioned was out of school and both good things mentioned, football and swimming are sports. Sport does appear frequently in the data and is generally spoken of positively. Mike says one good thing about secondary school is 'better PE lessons' (13-6-2007). The importance of sporting activities is also mentioned in Jo's audio diary where she says she hates school generally, apart from sports, particularly the teachers:

Well, school's been crap again today. It was all right in the morning 'cos I had house matches. We came second from last, we're in Blue. Green won, Red came second, I think ... or came second and then we came third and then ... Red came last. And Yellow didn't even have a team, which was pretty good. Err ... that's about it really. Oh, lunch-time nothing really happened (yawning), it got bad yesterday. Err ... but in art ... well, I've started going out with this guy called B, well I didn't even ask him to come to my lesson, but he came and sat outside the door of my art room, and then I went bright red

so I just walked off, I didn't really want to talk to him. So then Mr C went over and talked to him and apparently he was being really rude to him. I don't know if he was or not, because I wasn't anything to do with it. But then Sir picked on me and was just like if you don't tell me his name, raa, raa, raa - sorry I'm not going to do that, why are you only asking me, why can't you ask anyone else in the class? And he was just having a right go at me; he was like I'm not going to enter you for your art GCSE. And I said, what, because somebody came to the door? He was like, yes, plus he was being rude to me. And I said, well, that's not my problem, that's between you and him. Rrrrr. So, yeah, I might not be entered, which is a bit of a piss-take. Err ... and then I just kind of ... I didn't even look at him, I didn't bother saying anything to Mr C, there's no point winding him up. So I just listened to him having (yawning) ...it was like you've disrupted..., and I was just like mmm. I was really tempted to turn round and say, no, I haven't, because everybody's actually working and they're quiet. Oh well. And then he was like this is going to be a lot serious than you think, and I was just like, right, whatever. Because I was cleaning my table, so I didn't really care. And then 5 minutes later Mr N (deputy head) turns up – hi, Jo, come with me. Why do I just have to come with you? He was like 'tell me his name'. And I was just like why are you just

asking me? He was like because he might be trespassing, rrr, rrr, rrr. I said well ask anyone else, why do you always have to ... like why is it just on me sort of thing? And then ... yeah, and then Mr N took me up to his office and I was like why have you just dragged me out of my lesson, because it wasn't even to do with me. He was like, yes, but this pupil or supposed to be a pupil which wasn't in school uniform, disrupted your class. I was just like yeah. And he was like but he came to see you, yes? And I was just like, well, yeah, I am going out with him. And then ... Mr N ... writ a statement. I was just like, well, I'm not going to tell you his name, all I said was he's in Year 11, ring up the class and ask Mr C to ask anyone, but I'm not saying his name. And he did it and I was just like mmm, thank you, can I go now? So that was a total waste of time when I could have been doing something. Oh well, that's another really bad end.

Jo, audio-diary May 2007

The only good thing Jo talks about here are the inter-house sports, the rest suggests a pretty bad day. Relations with staff would appear to be a particular problem. Sport seems to offer a point of connection between students and between students and staff. Sports (particularly football and basketball in the park) are mentioned as key activities in Morton too: 'there's nothing to do apart from play football' (Lenny 13-6-2007).

Not all the social interaction in school is 'friendly'. There are clearly significant tensions between students and there is frequent reference to fights in school.

C so does 'no fights' mean – is that a rare occurrence then?

L yes cos normally in our tutor someone will fight with someone, Ellie fell out with someone in our tutor, can't remember who it was and she came to me like wah wah wah, and I said I don't want to get involved and I'm like in the middle of it.

C so you're not too keen on this bad behaviour stuff?

L lately – Andy – I've fallen out with him cos he doesn't take anything seriously at all – I mean that's why we're on tutor report cos, Mike, when was the last time you saw Andy not get parked [sent outside] in a lesson ?

M a tutor lesson?

L you know what I mean – he usually gets parked

C so all the tutor group are on report now?

L yeah

Lenny and Mike, interview 13-6-2007

In this excerpt Lenny and Mike talk of the tension in the tutor group and the consequences of getting involved. Fighting in school, (and Morton), is a

common occurrence. Lenny has tried to steer a way through without getting involved but is frustrated by the situation. He seems actively to resist being drawn into trouble.

Tackling poor behaviour in school became a 'priority' for the school during the period of the research. There were new site security features and all staff was reminded of the 'Behaviour for Learning' policy and procedures. The Morton students had noted the changes. The new cctv cameras in the toilets caused particular concern. Ivor called them 'an infringement of private individuals' (18-1-2007) and Marty said the place was 'like a prison with the new perimeter fence keeping us in – we are like battery hens' (18-1-2007). It was a tense time in the school; the diary notes record an acute awareness of the position as 'researcher', and not wanting to be seen to be 'recording the problems' (Diary notes, 5-9-07)

The ordering of social relations

A dominant part of the 'social talk' about school is about the complex ordering and organisation of the relationships between students in school.

Here is an example from a conversation with Lenny and Mike:

- C Who do you think usually gets a good deal in school?
- M The most popular ...
- C The most popular kids, they get a good deal right?

- M Yes they walk around at lunch time with their big group of mates they just ...and get on....
- C Right so if you can walk around at lunch time with a big group of mates and everybody knows you, it must mean you're successful?
- L I had a booster and so does Mike because I - everyone in Year 10 knows my older brother and that gives me like an extra group of people who have lots of younger brothers and sisters who knew me and because me and Mike stay close together and we started going around and eventually me and Mike we know basically everyone in our Year now don't we?
- L If you are popular you get good deals with the kids and if you're perfect you get good deals with teacher, but what we don't like is ...
- C But where you come from - does affect that popularity and that perfectness...?
- L Well it depends because if you're from somewhere big and you know a lot of people then you're like in your locality in college and you're like happy there already then you like say to everyone I know Year 10 I know 11 and they automatically think Oh he knows a lot of people I'll hang out with him and eventually it just piles on.

- C So if you know more people, so by coming from somewhere big you know more of the people that you're going to meet and that gives you a kind of higher ranking here.
- L And it's also if you can look after yourself.
- C OK, what do you mean by that?
- L Not get bullied
- C Right that's what you talked about making sure you know people that can help you out if necessary like your big brothers and stuff.
- L Even without my brother I think I'd be pretty high up because I don't let anyone like push me about and they know it. I mean most people if they have anything to do with me they know they best not come and say it to my face because they know I'd flip, and like Mike, people won't come and say anything to him

Lenny and Mike, interview 17-7-2007

The Morton students talk generally about popularity, linking it to 'power' almost using the two words interchangeably (for example Mike says. '[the most popular kids] walk around at lunchtime with their big group of mates and they just...and get on' (17-7-2007). Being 'popular' is good; being seen to know lots of people suggests you are popular. Drawing on his experience of living in the city, Lenny says it helps if you come from 'somewhere big' because then:

you know a lot of people, then you're like in your locality in college and you're like happy there already. Then you like say to everyone, I know year 10, I know year 11 and they automatically think, Oh he knows a lot of people, I'll hang out with him and eventually it just piles on

(Lenny, interview 17-7-2007)

Coming from somewhere small like Morton does not offer the same benefits of numbers.

There are a number of important issues raised here in relation to inclusion and exclusion. The 'power' of popularity operates within the students' grouping whereas being 'perfect' and a good student aligns you with the teachers. There is clearly a complex set of rules being used in this 'ordering' of relations. There appears to be a complex network of groups of students; belonging to particular groups gives the leaders and members status and power. Various factors play on these power structures (Youdell, 2006) and determine an individual's position. For the Morton students these include who you 'know', your family, where you come from. Some of these 'markers', such as your family and where you come from are known (in this context), are 'fixed' and may fix or limit identities for individual students.

The operation of ‘power’ in student groups sometimes seems to extend to spaces between students and teachers: for example, Lenny seems to have a particularly detailed knowledge of the ways school fights manifest themselves. He explains the timing of fights to avoid teacher intervention, (see in the excerpt below). He speaks often of the need to control his own temper and explained his family moved out of the city because he was getting in so many fights down there. Here he speaks about the way he perceives teachers control (or do not control) what happens:

L (not) the teachers –all they can do is to give you detention or ECR [internal exclusion] really, sometimes they don’t and we don’t take any notice of that but the teachers don’t get any control. There’s not what the teachers can do, it’s what they can’t do. Because no matter how much you try if someone’s after you at school they’re going to get you, they really are.

....

L it was awkward because everywhere you went you see people and they thought it’s [the fight] is going to kick off again and most times it did: it was just trying to keep away from teachers too – that’s one thing that really worries students, fighting doesn’t really worry them because they know, yeah I can do it another time too but it’s getting caught by a teacher fighting –when

you get caught by a teacher, when there are no teachers
you are the strongest one there when teachers come you
are not the strongest anymore, they have the power of
you .

Lenny, interview 17-7-2007

Lenny seems to be part of a 'fighting culture' which has its own rules, within part of the student body. There is a similar situation in Morton, where fights are a regular occurrence. Fights in school may well offer students opportunities to transgress, opportunities to resist the control by teachers, although in the end, the system is ultimately controlled by the teachers 'power' over students (Allan, 2008). These ideas will be developed further in the final chapter.

There are a number of important issues here in the context of inclusion and exclusion. All the Morton students I interviewed talked primarily about school as a social place. They seemed acutely aware of how the power play works. Contingent with all this talk about 'being in', being popular, is another position, that of being out'.

'Being out'

The Morton student interview data provide insights into the exclusionary nature of these social relations, through words spoken but also through the silences in the data. Here are two examples from interviews where students discuss other students from Morton who come to school but are excluded from the social

mainstream. When talking about the transfer from primary to secondary, Lenny and Mike mentioned one student who did not seem to be coping well:

- L There was like 6 year 7's who came up to this school which are now year 8's, Basically me and Mike went in one group and Robert, the kid, the other kids, who normally stayed with us, he latched on to someone else and he's in my tutor, but our tutor is sort of divided , it's like people who like sport and people who like— sort of different things and Robert, he's a good mate of mine, he's a nice enough guy, but because he don't do sport and stuff and he's a bit overweight as well so, means he's picked on
- C he's got separated one way or another?
- M like last year, all the people that was like popular, they was all in a big group of friends sort of thing and Robert got in with like the kids who didn't talk much and he dropped out sort of thing.
- L He has one thing which is not good—keeping to yourself—if you talk to people that's good but it's not talking to people when they ask you something and you just ignore them, makes you unpopular, which some kids do. Sometimes he'd start crying and I say hang on they may be joking and then he gets people in trouble

for it and they'll say why did you get me into trouble,
you know I didn't mean it

C presumably in Morton you all, knew him well so you
looked after him?

L he's a kind guy, he wouldn't hurt a fly he really would
not and he sort of shut down when he got here, he went
into a corner with other people and I say come on,
come up here come with me but he said no, he wouldn't
come with me

...

L Well I suppose he is happy in lessons but when there
are no teachers about, at say lunchtime, he knows
there's more chance for him to get bullied again so he
tries to get in a group.

...

L We try and get him to play sometimes but he can't take
a joke either—the other day we was messing around—we
wanted to improve the situation by laughing—if anyone
speaks to him, he'll walk off— he'll go.

C What was he like at primary school?

L The same. One time I fell out with him, he kept doing it
and I said that's it, I give up— because I'm trying to help
him and he obviously don't want it.

C So he didn't find socialising at primary school easy but people just accepted him for who he was?

L at primary he didn't get bullied—he was the biggest one there, but when he got down here, he wasn't one of the biggest any more, I don't know what happened to him, I can't describe it. No-one bullied him in primary school but as soon as that went [his size advantage], that was his main one. All three of us came the same for the induction day and he walked in there and there was masses of people and his face went and he went 'oh no' and from the moment he did that, I thought he's not going to make it—that's not going to be good.

Lenny and Mike, interview 17-07-2007

Jo and Ivor talk about a similar situation in their year group, year 11:

I Marty got picked on a lot when he was in younger years cos he used to be a right little chubby git but that's why he got picked on

J it happens to JR really badly

I but JR puts himself in it sometimes JR is cool, he's alright he's a good guy, but when he tries to like join in conversations and he acts like he's all cool and someone else just comes along and

- J that's because he's being himself probably and then if people don't like him
- I no no, he's not being himself he even says in Maths he just wants to join in and he just butts into other people's conversations
- J do you know why that is I? because nobody wants to talk to him because of his eyes
- I yes, we do, everybody in our class...
- J but think about the rest of the school? that's like 200 people, the only people he has to talk to... [is us lot]

Jo and Ivor, interview 25-1-2007

JR was 'an alright, good guy', but has become isolated because 'he just butts into other people's conversations', not managing the social situation. In both these examples the students acknowledge the disconnection and express real concern for the excluded students. Lenny talks of trying to get Robert to 'fit in'- to be like and to do what others do. He notes the difficulties Robert faced transferring to secondary school and is very aware of the 'dangers' of lunchtime for Robert. Jo has clearly made an effort to prevent JR's exclusion from social situations.

The data from the Morton student interviews highlight the domination of the social in their school experience. This is a key to understanding the inclusionary/exclusionary nature of schooling. What is clear in the data is that

talk about 'the social', totally dominates the student's reports of their experience of school. Talk of lessons and learning is minimal which concurs with the findings of Harris and Ruddock (1993). Throughout the entire collection of interviews, there is very little spontaneous talk about teachers and lessons; this had to be probed for specifically. The work of Gordon et al. (2000) and Lahelma (2002) found a similar situation in their long term large scale studies of social experience of schooling. Lahelma (2002) reported that she had to ask specifically about lessons and teachers if she wanted to hear students' views on these.

The Morton students may not have wanted to appear to be positive about school, lessons and teachers. Being keen on school is not 'cool' and as will be shown in a later section, there is a negative discourse about school generally in Morton.

School as a layered place

A significant silence in the Morton student data is talk about teachers and lessons. There are very few mentions in the interviews and where this does happen, it follows a prompt. The references that are made are rare, yet significant and insightful and will be presented in some detail.

Comments made about teachers were generally desultory which did not come as a surprise. What was a surprise was how far the separation went. For example Jo and Ivor were explaining how much they value their local youth

worker, Pat Drew. They finish with reference to Barbara Lind, a member of the school administration staff:

I well - he's [Pat] just - if you want to talk he'll just take you into a room and you can talk it over with him. He like listens to you and tries to help you with things and work and things.

C is there anyone like that in school?

I no, not really

C Head of Year?

I no chance

J he's a nice guy but when you want help it depends on whether he likes you or not

I he'll go 'I'll try and sort it out tomorrow' and then you go back and he'll say 'I'll try and sort it out tomorrow'

C he does seem extremely busy

I but it doesn't mean...what it is, is he's a general teacher. I know he's Head of Year but it doesn't mean that he can't sort of help out —he helps out other years like no problem but with our year he just doesn't really.

C how about the new Learning Mentor, Miss G?

I oh yeah, she's cool, she's well organized.

- J Mrs Lind used to be alright but I don't know what's happened to her. She's nothing to do with the children anymore. She's been promoted or something like that.
- I she doesn't speak to us anymore She speaks to another person like a little minion and tells her what she wants done
- C so she was someone you could talk to but you can't speak to her any more?
- J she would listen and she would know what to say afterwards.
- I she was, but she just doesn't come out as much as she used to. She doesn't like intervene with anyone. She just sits behind a desk whereas before she would just walk up to people and go 'hi, you alright?' in the morning. Now she looks at you and she just looks down on her paper again.

Jo and Ivor, interview 25-1-2007

Jo and Ivor have worked out which adults are worth connecting with – it's the support staff that seem to offer points of connection. The Learning Mentor, Miss G and Mrs Lind are people they can get help from – the Head of Year is too busy. The removal of Mrs Lind away from the student help desk is noted, the connection lost. It would seem that it was the person that was important, not just the job she was doing. Her replacement by a 'little minion' does not make

the same connection. It was the human being, Barbara Lind, who was important to Jo and Ivor.

In this next excerpt, Lenny and Mike are talking in response to a question about adults that they saw as helpful. Again it is surprising just how separate the students and teachers were perceived to be:

L yeah he's [Mr North, a Learning Mentor] OK to talk to

– I talk to him sometimes

C so who else would you talk to if you know – needed to talk about something?

L you mean a teacher?

C anybody in school

L for me I'd go to talk to Steve [a friend] or something – if I needed someone bigger I'd go to my brother or one of his mates

C so you'd talk to friends first?

L yeah – teachers would be the last option...

C that's interesting – not even someone like Mr North?

L he'll make you feel better but he won't stop the problem what are they going to do, put them on report? – that's not going to stop them

...

- C what about you, Mike? – if you had a problem in school or needed some help with something- what sort of people would you talk to?
- M my friends
- C not teachers, not classroom assistants or helpers?
- M no
- C really, why not?
- M cos friends understand and could sort the problem and do stuff about it
- C friends do?
- L/M yeah
- C give me an example?
- L when you and Karl fell out ? – when you were in year 7 – when him and Karl fell out and I was stuck in the middle I like Karl but I like Mike more – so I knew what Karl was doing was wrong – he was being really harsh – so I went and spoke to him and said stop it – and basically he said why, why, and I went cos it's unfair – I then started saying what if I did this what if I did that – and basically knocked some sense into him- they are back friends now.
- C so people like Mr North or your Head of Year wouldn't be someone you'd go to?

L no – the only reason I'd go to Mr Thomas [Head of Year] is for rugby, that's it.

Lenny and Mike, interview 13-6-2007

The students saw teachers as the last place to go for help (unless it was for sport, another sporting point of connection). Friends were seen as much more important sources of help and support and, for Lenny, his brother and his mates, if you 'needed someone bigger'. This is perhaps an indication of the independence of the student layer, with its own rules, systems and structures; and an indication of just how separate the teacher and student layers can become.

These two excerpts above, illustrate the connections Morton students have with adults who are not teachers. Lenny talks to Mr North the Learning Mentor and Jo and Ivor note with sadness that Mrs Lind has been moved from her 'front line' student support role. For Lenny and Mike, it is friends they call on for support, not teachers.

Jo and Ivor were about to leave school and were looking back over the years at school. For Jo, relations with teachers have been turbulent. Jo's opening audio diary excerpt shows how much scorn she had for teachers and their management of lessons and is echoed here in the conversation with Ivor:

- J teachers have no control over the kids, people...
(getting upset)
- I like in our new class there's a teacher, before she couldn't hack with it, she couldn't do anything to stop Mrs D and now she's even more... she's got all the students in the lower sets so they are constantly yakking and having a go. Yesterday we had to... our teacher ran out crying because she couldn't hack it the Mr H came in and everyone just ignored him because he was just over the top and he got Mr C [the principal] in and then everyone just ignored him and carried on talking, they try to act like they are the boss of everything
- J that's because they are, they are trying to teach us, it us that's peeing off the school that's why the teachers aren't like nnnnn all the time, sometimes it's just favouritism
- C there seems to be this big tension between what the teachers are doing and what the students are doing
- J I get really wound up because you get all these pathetic little students and 'oh look at me I'm the big boy'
- I Jo, Jo, chill you are really pissed off
- C does this bad behaviour put people off?
- J it's another reason people don't want to come to school because they are not going to learn anything

C and you put the responsibility for that with the students?

J there is in a way but there is also because the teachers
don't have any control

I people who want to learn

J if they have no control, if they send them to ECR
[internal exclusion room] where they should be.

C so you'd like to see an improvement in structure and
discipline?

J yeah if I had my way the cane would be back in school
but if you think about it, it would stop people doing
what they are doing it wouldn't happen again

I like my maths teacher was – I'd like talk to my mate
about work and then he'd send me out and then you see
L sitting there, mucking around chucking paper
aeroplanes and sir would just say stop it L – it's just
something about teachers not liking students and the
ones they can control, the ones they know they can
break and those...

C because you would listen when you were sent out, you
were the one that was sent out?

I yeah he would say you were disrupting the class and I
goes – I said to him I'm only disrupting the class
because you made me disrupt

C and you've felt picked on too Jo?

- J yeah my mum was actually going to move me to a different school because she didn't like the school and she didn't like what they were doing to us and my grades were double F, double F , double Es because of the simple fact they don't know,how to teach
- C so what was it about you that irritated teachers? your unwillingness to engage or your willingness to speak your mind?
- J I think I was a bit rude
- I I knew Jo when she was little she was a bit gobby but she was flipping – she'd do it, she'd do her work and that's what I think scared the teachers
- J if I was with my cousin and we were mucking around
- C you speak your mind
- I she'd have no problem doing that
- J you just have to – it works two ways -. if you are nice to them they will think oh she's being nice can't do anything to her and if I was like – if I give them what they want then they can do what they like but I've learnt to think a bit harder than them really I don't know but the schools just – my mum and dad both rang up Mr N and Mr T and threatened the school and ever since that day they have never done anything to me so I can get away with quite a lot now

C you have talked about favouritism too

J because you have like 30 children in a class, the people that sit in the front the really snobby people and we sit at the back and he'll just like – he'll just talk to them look at them and then explain and we all have our hands up at the back and he wouldn't care and that's happened loads of times.

J I've said look, I have put up my hand.

C so in school you are valued in school if you are academically successful?

J yes so if they know people are going to fail, fair enough if they mess around you don't want to waste your time on them but there's people who do actually just need help in general and want it but they just don't want to.

Jo and Ivor, interview 25-1-2007

Here Jo and Ivor seem angry and feel let down by teachers. They are frustrated by the poor behaviour in class and demand stricter teachers with more control-resorting to corporal punishment if needed. They perceive teachers to be unfair in their attitude towards different groups of students.

Jo has worked out a way of staying in school to get what she needs, (the qualifications to join a catering course at college) by manipulating battles with teachers until she sees herself as a winner, 'but I've learnt to think a bit harder

than them really', resisting the 'forces' that would exclude her. Ivor wanted to join the RAF and knew he needed to get onto A level courses, so he too has worked out a way of staying on board. Both have strong extrinsic motivational factors that have kept them connected with the institution but not with teachers.

Jo and Ivor appear to have few connections with teachers but have made it to the end of the year and both got onto the courses they were hoping for. Lenny and Mike are much younger. The data show they, too, talk little of teachers.

Here are two examples of when they do, prompted by a question about teachers they liked:

L Mr T ain't bad [a PE teacher]

M Mrs W [a science teacher]

C what makes them good?

L they understand – with Mr T– if you do something wrong he's reasonable – if you do something wrong by mistake – he'll say that was a mistake don't do it again but if you do something wrong on purpose then he'll go strict which I find fair

C what would you say is good about someone like Mrs W then Mike?

M well, she like gets to know people quite well

C gets to know people quite well – that's interesting

M yeah – and in our class we've got most of the people that cause trouble – but she keeps the class under control and does loads of practical most of the time and lets us go outside to get like practical stuff like leaves – she keeps us all under control- she doesn't – I've never heard her shout.

C so those sorts of things make a good teacher, getting to know you and keeping things under control?

M and she like asks what we've done over half term and that.

C takes an interest?

L see my teacher doesn't get it – he does the opposite – he doesn't care what you do as long as you do your work but he doesn't tell us anything he'll just stick pages on the board and say go on and do your work and I think – I don't know what to do, I don't understand, you haven't shown us.

Lenny and Mike, interview 13-6-2007

L Mr T he's the only one I get on with because normally when we're not doing PE we sit down and have a whole PE lesson talking about rugby or something. I can't seem to have good friends you know with other teachers.

Lenny, interview 17-7-2007

L my favourite is Mr T– he’s nice. Originally he knew my brother and my brother is good at rugby and I play like him and I was tackling and he said ‘who’s your brother?’ and I said CR and he went ‘are you ‘the Tackler’s brother?’ and I went ‘the Tackler?’. Ever since, he’s called me ‘the Tackler’.

Lenny , interview 16-5-2007

Here they identify the kind of teachers that they value; people they can connect with, teachers who can keep control and give good lessons. Mike identifies the science teacher as someone ‘who likes get to know people quite well’ and takes an interest in the students. She ‘keeps the class under control’ and offers controlled, interesting lessons with ‘loads of practical most of the time’.

Lenny’s PE teacher is important because he seems prepared ‘for a whole PE lesson talking about rugby or something’ and makes connections through the family, via Lenny’s brother. In both excerpts the students do seem to want to have good learning experiences in school, with controlled environments where people are interested in them-they do seem to want to make connections with teachers. Lenny is sad that he ‘can’t seem to have good friends, you know, with other teachers’.

Adult interviews

This research looks at what role school plays in the lives of young people from Morton. In order to contextualise the student's responses, a sample of adults in the school was interviewed. The transcripts from the adults interviewed, showed a range of perspectives on their roles in school and how this links with students. There were significant differences between the responses from teachers and support staff.

The senior teachers focused on the processes involved in their roles: the finances, paperwork and systems. Here's an example from the SENCO, detailing what she does in a day:

Yeah, I mean keeping an eye on Fran [senior TA] as she ...
err ... sorts out the TAs [teaching assistants]. I line manage her. So she's checking that all the TAs are in the right place or if somebody is missing. I usually have a chat or a nod with the autistic ones, because they come into the room where I'm working, so it's a matter of just wittering to them a bit. Usually there's a huge series of e-mails to deal with first thing, which is questions about various people's things to do, which often end up with me having to write reports back to people and follow-up stuff. A lot of requests at the moment for testing. Parents will request to see if children have dyslexia, as a desperation thing. Most of the naughty children

we seem to have to test for dyslexia – which I think is right. Then I would normally sort out teaching, because I do the maths teaching and LS [learning support] teaching, so it's nearly half the time doing teaching. Testing for the rolling programme we all do together, and as the year goes by we've annual reviews to do, provision mapping in the student information sheets, a lot of documentation, meetings, well once a week formally, which includes the quality assurance things. And this weekend I've done an agenda ready for the departmental meeting, so I went through the stuff with [Assistant Principal]. They are paper exercises up to a point.

Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), interview 9-5-2007

These observations resonate with the extensive literature on the role of SENCO being dominated by staff management and administration (Gibson and Blandford, 2005). In the data collected from the teachers, there was a significant absence of direct talk about students. When Handy did his groundbreaking study of schools as organisations, he too noted the absence of talk about students in school – it was as if they didn't exist (Handy, 1984).

Jane Redway was not a senior teacher. She has been teaching for two years and this was her first year as a tutor. She talks about students directly when talking about her role:

I think the first thing is that I'm hopefully going to be the one consistent person that people in my tutor group see, so for the 5 years they are in Key Stage 3 and 4 they will always come in and see me first thing in the morning. I'm also the first, probably the first contact with parents unless they feel they have an issue where they need to go to the head of year. So it's that seeing them develop and being able to monitor their progress as well as being there in a sort of caring capacity.

You have to approach it a little bit like parenting in that there is a discipline that comes from, you know this is the line and I will do this if you don't cooperate and behave, with the school but on the other hand you also have to be approachable and know a little bit about them and their individual situations so that you can deal with things appropriately so that if you have a child that has parents who have recently spilt up you are the person who knows that first hand so if they come into school and they are very upset you've got some idea why and so you may then be the person that sends an email round to all the teachers that teach Fred Bloggs, this has happened. So you are providing not a barrier between them and the rest of the school but a bridge of understanding – so this has happened to this child we need to be understanding in that capacity – that's a fairly important thing –because otherwise, it's just too big,

people just don't have, we don't have time as subject teachers. If some one is arriving upset somebody may be able to give them a couple of minutes to find out if they are going to be able to work in your lesson – but they might not want to tell you but if you are a tutor who develops a relationship they will want to tell you about things or may feel able to tell you about things.

But also if some of them are doing something wrong and a teacher has given them a detention, if I think it needs it, I will jolly well give them another detention so they need to know Mrs Redway is going to know about that.

Communication is they key though and there's – it's not a problem – but we now have two assemblies a week so I only see them three times a week sometimes if you have got lots of notices to hand out so you are also communicating school business to them, so you are reading out notices, telling them what's happening and sometimes you might just take the register and that's it, rather than have the chance to talk, so you have to kind of build that into your morning. There are two or three in my group that I make sure I speak to every morning because I know they have big problems at home so I

make sure I've communicated with them, they've seen a friendly face.

Jane Redway, form tutor, interview 11-5-2007

Jane Redway talks passionately about her role as a tutor and took it very seriously. She compares her work as a form tutor to parenting with its dual role of care and discipline and tries to act as a 'bridge of understanding' between the student and 'the school'. She is frustrated by the lack of time to do her job properly and identifies difficulties with communication; this problem is also mentioned by Barbara Lind from Student Support Services. The Morton students do not mention their form teachers at all and other pastoral staff, (for example Heads of Year), are not seen as helpful. The pastoral role does not seem to be a 'bridge' or point of connection for the Morton students.

Being in-between

Analysing the data from support staff shows that most of these adults spoke of students and their experience in school directly, in contrast to the teachers. Here are some examples:

Jill Carter is a lunchtime supervisor and a Teaching Assistant. She lives in Morton and has children at the secondary school. Here she is talking about her role at lunchtime:

J that was one of the most important aspects of my job. It wasn't to see that they behaved – obviously that was important, the bullying side was very important, but I found that my main reason was to be there for the children, to help them through the day. And if I ended up with ten or twelve then I ended up with ten ... you know.

C and you felt that they really valued that?

J yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

C there wasn't anywhere for them to go at lunchtime?

J err ... there's plenty of places for them to go and hang out with friends, but that's okay for the ones who are capable of doing that, for the ones who are struggling socially and are nervous and everything else, it's hard, really, really hard.

C particularly those long break-times and lunchtimes.

J yeah. We pushed to have the break-times and lunchtimes cut, because it was too much for a lot of them. Which is a shame for the others who were coping, obviously, but winter-times when they're all in and it can get very boisterous and loud, for the children who can't cope with that it's horrible. So much as you probably didn't want ten or twelve of them (laughs), you do it because I think that's what you should do.

Sort of surrogate mum or aunty or whatever they want you to be really. And a lot of the time they just want to stand there quietly with you, it's just almost like a sort of security. It's heartbreaking really and you see the same ones day after day. But then you also ... it's good because I had a few for several months and then they gradually filter off and then you see them join groups and it's brilliant, they've gone, they've flown the nest. (laughs).

Jill Carter, lunchtime supervisor and Teaching Assistant,
interview 2-7-2007

Jill's words resonate with those in the previous section, where Lenny and Mike describe the alienation of Robert. Lenny said 'Well I suppose he is happy in lessons but when there are no teachers about, at say lunchtime, he knows there's more chance for him to get bullied again so he tries to get in a group' (17-7-2007). Jill witnesses the challenge of the social side of school which dominates the student's experience outside lessons times. Her awareness of the intensity of this experience will be contingent with her own background in Morton. Her descriptions of the lunchtime experience for many students at the school would seem to be one the 'petty cruelties' (Foucault, 1991) of daily school life. Jill also raises concern about the size of the school:

People generally think it's too big. I myself feel it's too big; I'd like to see a lower school where the sevens and eights are kept, and then the older ones. I think it's probably too much when they first come. Although they seem to cope reasonably well I still think they ought to split the school. And apparently it used to be like that, where (name) primary is now, that used to be the local ... I didn't know that until recently. Yeah, and I think that's a fantastic idea and I wish they would do that again, I really do. Yeah. You can see their faces, that they're terrified. And that's why I do supervisor here, because you were sort of like a mother hen – come and see me at dinner-time. It just gives them ... you know, they used to come over, couldn't wait. And I'd just talk them down really. It's a scary place, especially if their friends are on different dinners. And you know what it's like, if you're in a blind panic you can't see anybody, can you? It's really intimidating.

Jill Carter, interview 2-7-2007

She sees that numbers of students in one place creates an 'intimidating' environment, particularly at break and lunchtimes.

Barbara Lind is a member of the school administration team, who became responsible for a new Student Support Service. She was also someone who seemed aware of the social needs of young people in school. She was someone

that the students said would understand them. Here she reflects her on her changing role at the college:

B I have worked at the college a long time so I already had good working relationships with lots of people, so you know I have been able to connect young people with the right people and that has been fairly easy for me to do. So I wasn't dealing with things for them I was connecting them and trying to make things happen for them. However there was another level where I could help them because it was apparent that some people come in with quite big problems and I needed to get the right professional connected to them and I would always make sure that was done as soon as possible and follow that up to make sure that happened. There was also a lower level of issues which were you know really basic fundamental things that young people get really frustrated about because they couldn't get small bits of information, small things sorted out and I could do that incredibly easily by just being there to sort that out, so I think I was perceived as being someone very helpful and that was quite straightforward for me to do but it was something that was proving difficult before my role developed.

C Was there any sense that it was as a response to student and their relationship to the school or was it as a response to an external agenda like Every Child Matters?

B I think it was both and I do think there was a change in perception in that the school perhaps, I had heard say, that you know, the students come here to learn and maybe ought to leave their troubles at the gate.

Barbara Lind, Student Support Services, interview 1-5-2007

She talks primarily of making connections and again acknowledges the difficulties of the daily lived experiences of students in school.

This theme appears in notes taken in an interview with a Learning Mentor, Steve North. He was the only member of school staff who spoke at any length about the social element of school life. This data concurs with what was heard from the students. He was asked how he saw young people's experience of school:

The children are in a web. When the strands become disconnected, the relationship with school implodes.

Connections are in the form of friends, relationships, romantic and otherwise, lessons, and some teachers.

Also important is gossip and social time. Slagging off is vital, students seem to thrive on it. Enjoying all this is as important as lessons – but students who don't, won't or can't engage in all of this get isolated, disconnected. It affects them more than they think.

The hierarchy and where they are in it is important. Their image is vital. Boys are insecure about it. For girls it's crucial. Take Frank – short, red hair, glasses – by rights he should be a victim, but he's quite an important character to people.

The people who attach themselves to him, gain value.

Stephen has gained credibility because he's associated with Frank.

Another connection is that I've got to be here, it's a legal requirement

Another connection is enjoyment of lessons – has some value for teachers who build the relationships, firm up the connections.

Lessons are less important for the vulnerable and behaviour kids – they are more important for 'mainstream' kids' – if you are successful, you're more likely to like lessons

Students who truant or wander around aimlessly – they gather and they are secure in the knowledge – there will be other kids like them.

In this intense environment where the student's social world seems to be so dominant, what happens to those students he mentions – those 'who don't, won't or can't engage in all of this' such as Robert. Steve sees the nature of connection through shared enjoyment of lessons but also through the groups that form outside lessons and 'formal school'. It is pertinent to be reminded of all the young people from Morton, who do not attend school, who do not engage directly in any of this. Perhaps this intense social world had a role to play in their non-attendance. It would be interesting to investigate this further.

It is interesting that all these support staff talked of caring and connecting. They are a key factor in illuminating the nature and importance of connections and relationships students have in school. Understanding these connections will inform the development of schools where all feel connected.

The teacher/student boundary interactions are also a very useful point of connection to study in more detail. These are key to developing an understanding of the role relations (Macmurray, 1961) play in the connections young people make with the formal layer of their schooling. Perhaps these 'borderlands' (Giroux, 2005) can offer unstable space (Foucault, 1977) where limits are forced, in which change can happen. Perhaps the 'spaces between' teachers and students can offer opportunities where the rules of interaction can

be different and allow new connections to be made. In the final chapter of the thesis, this will be explored in detail, the importance of these relations with adults in developing positive connections in school and how this informs the development of inclusive schooling.

Interviews with the Assistant Principal, Principal and School Governor

The Assistant Principal is responsible for Pastoral matters including inclusion, exclusion and the Learning Support team. This was the first adult interview undertaken as part of the pilot phase and was more structured than subsequent interview. She asked not to be recorded so notes were taken. The interview is presented in the form of notes written during and after the interview, in answer to the questions,

I am interested in researching the role of school in young people's lives and am considering using Morton as a case study.

She was angry even at the idea of Morton being 'special'.

She immediately retorted that there's no data to show there's a difference between Morton and say Downland

She'd been invited to meetings to talk about Youth problem (in Morton) but wouldn't go.

Based on what evidence? Purely anecdotal – vandalism, one's perception. These are problems in the community

Morton? They says it's the worst village – no way – is it more deserving than any of the others? Why should we drop everything and attend to Morton?

'Poor attendance, achievement? -there is no evidence there is a particular problem. We don't have this data'

'Over the years villages have had these myths – it's Heathfield, then Downland and now Morton'

What does inclusion mean to you?

It's a nightmare

Young people are being included in a community college despite disability/behaviour etc that should exclude them.

There are problems with lack of funding

There are no special schools left, no experts left – the specialised services are no longer around.

For example autistic children in mainstream. I agree with the principle but the working practice means the life of educators is very difficult ad this imposes on other students, the students them selves and staff.

What are your primary concerns with 'inclusion'?

Improvements [to inclusion] have been made to the school but they are not always well thought out

Her primary concern is extreme behaviour and student mental health .The latter is not being 'treated' – difficulties with parents and GPs not referring.

We don't have any training to deal with the extremities of mental health

Is there any conflict between the 'inclusion' and 'standards' agendas?

Staff are definitely under pressure to raise results

She spoke very carefully here – took great care with what she said

The pressure to get the grades does not sit comfortably with 'inclusion'

Teachers may not always be willing to help 'needy' students – they show a reluctance to engage with these students

In the department I teach in there is a distinct feeling of 'collegiality' – co-operation. Students [the needy ones] are shared around – this benefits everyone.

It may decrease the value added.

It's a particularly close and co-operative, strong department

I'm aware of a reduction in sharing in other departments

Is this collegiality felt elsewhere?

There is a decrease generally – in school and between local schools. The LEA is leading the re-siting of ‘troublesome students’ - called ‘fresh start’.

In isolated communities this is very difficult.

There is reluctance for schools to take on extreme problems. Admin and bureaucracy are also getting in the way of teaching – a significant amount of time is taken away from students leads to a decrease in care.

There’s a government initiative every week leading to a new load for teachers.

Assistant Principal, notes from interview 8-2-2007

Her responses were startling, especially her angry response to a focus on students from Morton which had a significant impact on subsequent research questions. She dismissed the problems that are quite clearly evident. If there were issues, she perceived them as ‘problems in the community’ and not for the school. Her reaction triggered a re-examination of the research proposal and preconceptions were questioned, whilst searching for evidence to support her claims. It was clear she had no wish to engage with discussion on any of the communities in the school catchment, like Morton, that were a cause for concern by local authorities such as the police and social services. She was focused entirely on what was going on in the school. Her comments suggest her major concern was ‘the pressure to raise results’ which resonates with the

observations made by Ball (2008) that school leaders have become more focused on what happens inside their schools and less on outside.

The Principal

This interview was very short due to time constraints. The interview was not recorded and notes were written after the interview had taken place.

After discussing general progress of the project, the talk (from the Principal) was of 'them' 'the small group moving away from the more affluent, successful others'. 'Can we have them in the 'norm' group now? Now they are getting so far away?'

He alluded to an article in 'The Times' about grammar schools (schools for the few) 'compare that with the situation now where you have a school for the many – more affluent, more academically successful and a small group of 'others' who don't – can't or won't fit into the norm'

He talked of special schools, where these 'different, young people who don't fit can go'. He said that 'schools are not equipped to accommodate this very small minority who cause trouble'. Money should be reallocated to mainstream school 'for funding to include the people who would have gone to 'special school'.

He spoke of Morton 'as an isolated community' and 'there's one street I have in my mind as you talk about this', 'it's immediately apparent there are youngsters hanging around in the day' – 'they obviously have a problem up there'.

Principal, notes from interview 7-6-2007

For the Principal, like the Assistant Principal, the problems of Morton are 'up there' and not seen as an issue for the school. The Principal talks about 'norms' and people who 'don't, can't or won't fit'- and he argues 'can we have them in the norm group now, now that they are getting so far away? (referring to very badly behaved students). He aligns this 'small group of others' with special schools. They are a problem as 'schools are not equipped to accommodate' them. These views are familiar in discussions about inclusion and resonate with Ainscow, Booth et al.'s (2006) first two perceptions of inclusion – aligning it with special needs, poor behaviour and disciplinary exclusion from school and students who do not fit into the norm. In the policy, inclusion is aligned directly with attendance – attendance being seen as a measure of inclusion. There is also the sense here of Allan's 'territories of failure' (Allan, 2008 p. 9), inclusion is seen here as 'a nightmare' (Assistant Principal 8-2-2007).

The school governor

The school governor interviewed (Mike Layton) is a local business man. His comments had a different focus to that of the two school managers. He made

comment about the perceived lack of connection within the school, between students and staff and between the school and its local community. These comments related to his contact with his customers, friends and social contacts in Riversville, Here are some of the notes made during the interview:

The school management are trying to strengthen links
between staff and students

It's a shame not more staff live locally or support locally

Why are there separate loos for staff and students?

What don't staff have meals in the refectory?

Trying to improve relationships with feeder primary school,-
principal visiting them

Positive relationship with the local press – very helpful

It's very easy to criticise a head teacher

Having worked in Riversville for so long, I know there will
always be people who think differently

Smaller schools would give problems; two smaller ones
would split the community

Attendance is a real problem for the school

Mike Layton, Governor, notes from interview 13-2-208

This collection of notes identifies a number of issues raised by other contributors. Relations between staff and students are not good and attendance is a real issue. The school managers are trying to improve things here and

improve the profile of the school in the locality, with the local press acknowledged as an important player. The lack of connection with the community is raised in the Governors meeting ‘sufficient community work within the school is not being done because the priority has been raising standards’ (Governor Meeting minutes 20-5-2009). He also raises the issues of the size of the school mentioned by many other contributors. The size of the school, attendance and poor relationships within the school would seem to be problematic for all students, not just those from Morton.

Inclusion into what? Inclusion and the school

In order to contextualise the interview responses to questions about inclusion, it is important to see how ‘Inclusion’ is constructed and presented by leaders at the school through policy. The words in the policy and from the school leaders illustrate the potential for discourse to ‘words the world’ (Lather, 1994). The language used in these sources had a profound effect on the subsequent perception of the school and will have had an influence on the institution from which they emerge.

The school’s ‘Inclusion Policy’ (as published on the school’s website [accessed 21-6-09]), is presented in Appendix 3. There is another separate policy titled ‘A Policy for Pupils with Additional Educational Needs’ – which deals with the support offered by the Learning Support Team.

The Inclusion Policy begins with:

In our aim to raise educational standards for all our students, we recognise the vital importance of regular attendance and high standards of student behaviour. By developing good practices in these two areas, we aim to keep our exclusion figures to a minimum.

The policy is written primarily in terms of attendance and being 'not excluded'. Inclusion is linked to 'being present in school' and with students 'at risk' of exclusion for emotional and behavioural reasons.

The Policy continues by listing the 'Social Inclusion Criteria'

Students who are deemed to be at risk might fulfil all or some of the following:

- Sustained pattern of exclusion from lessons
- Periods of short-term suspension
- Unexpected emotional or behavioural dysfunction
- Volatile conduct and poor management of emotions
- Inability to access the curriculum because of consistent non-attendance

These two excerpts illustrate that inclusion/exclusion of all students at the school are framed using two dimensions, 'attendance' and 'exclusion as a result of emotional or behavioural dysfunction'. They also illustrate the language used

to frame inclusion at the school. Inclusion is aligned with 'behavioural dysfunction' 'volatile' uncontrolled emotions, 'inability' and exclusion.

Other important issues

Attendance and exclusions

During the period of the research there were problems with student attendance and high levels of student exclusions from the school. School data for both these issues were being monitored by the local authority (Governor Meeting minutes 3-10-2007) and the issues were reported in the local press. The school was responding to these problems in various ways and school attendance was improving.

The attendance data analysed for this study identifies these whole school problems with attendance, along with the specific issues for students from Morton, where is evidence of a 'culture' of poor school attendance. Students spoke about school attendance (or rather non-attendance) in their interviews. Here is an example from Ali talking about 'skiving' (not attending school):

A very occasionally – I might do one lesson a week –
sometimes I don't skive at all

C do you think there's a kind of culture of that in school?

A sometimes, I had a friend who got caught by the police
the other day actually – he was just like walking to
school he saw a couple of people sat in the park on a
bench and he was just like I really can't be bothered to

go to school, I feel a bit ill, and he sat down for a lesson and then went into school the lesson afterwards and he got caught by the police

C do you think there's more police involved now?

A yeah there's lots of police involved now, you get like, it's really hard to get out of school – you have to like run away – it's bad

C did it use to be easier?

A yeah it used to be easier, the gates used to be open and stuff like that but now it's not really, you can't get out, but everyone does – you can get out if you really want to – I think it's stupid really – I think you should be allowed to go out lunch – I don't think it's right to let them skive, cos that's not right, is it but they should be allowed to go out at lunch or something like that and if they sign out or whatever or do whatever, I reckon they should be allowed – cos it's not like you are doing any harm and if you do it all properly

C so you can't get a lunch pass?

A you can but it's like – it got banned for a while because so many people had them – so we weren't allowed them

C at one time there were lots of people coming into school and then bunking off straight away – do you think has changed?

A yeah – the year that’s just left, they used to come in to school and not go to school sort of thing – they’d do that for a whole week maybe lots of people skived a lot – like our year isn’t so bad – but it is if you know what I mean – it’s not as bad as it was but it was a lot worse, it’s getting better – eventually I reckon it won’t completely go away but it won’t be as bad it was – it was really, really bad at one point

C so would people just come off the Morton bus and just...

A walk out – go to the park for the whole day

Ali, interview 7-7-2007

Ali indicates that skiving from school is a regular occurrence for many students but is now harder. She refers to the efforts being taken by the school to try and reduce the number of students leaving the school site during the day and is angry about this. Lenny commented on the ‘culture’ of young people in Morton not attending school (see details in Chapter 4). When asked by another youngster to stay off school with him for the day Lenny said:

I said I can’t because of my education and I want a good life but he went, don’t mind I’ll get someone else and I saw him [after school] at the bus stop where he gets on, and I asked

him what did you do ? and he said nothing, so I said why
didn't you go to school? because it's just normal [not to go].

Lenny, interview 16-5-2007

Other people who talk about the problem with non-attendance of Morton students were the youth worker (15-1-2008), Education Welfare Officer (Diary notes 10-5-2007), the Parish Councillor (29-6-2007) and the Police Officer (15-5-2007). It was also raised at Neighbourhood Renewal meetings (e.g. Diary notes 1-2-2005). It is interesting to note that these were all observations made from people outside the school. School attendance is clearly a very visible public issue for this school.

The data listed above indicates a perception of a significant problem of poor attendance with secondary school students from Morton. The interview from the Principal, Assistant Principal, Inclusion Policy and Governor meeting minutes (3-10-2007) indicate a school focused on issues of attendance with a view of inclusion limited to Special Educational Needs (SEN), Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and exclusion for disciplinary reasons, (Ainscow et al., 2006). The significance of this school context in which the young people from Morton are operating will be discussed in the following chapter.

Them and us: a separating discourse

In addition to analysing data for content, sensitivity to discourse (Willig, 1999) has been sustained throughout the study. There is a strong ‘separating’, ‘otherising’ discourse percolating throughout the data, about the community of Morton and the school. Otherising discourse is evident in documents, meetings, reports and interviews about and within Morton and the secondary school. It is important to be aware of this when listening to the students’ experiences of school.

About Morton

A profoundly negative discourse about Morton has been detected in historical and contemporary sources. Some of this is explicit, some more implicit, some spoken some unspoken. This ‘badmouthing’ (Corbett, 1996) of Morton and its inhabitants is clearly having an impact. Here is an example from the front page of the local Riversville paper (10-5-2007):

Vandalism in small hours prompts residents to plead:

Crack down on young rowdies

by John H

RESIDENTS in a village have called for action to stop what they say is an increasing problem of vandalism by youngsters.

A gang of teenage youngsters have been accused of making life a misery for people in the village with foul language, vandalism, arson and in one case, an alleged assault.

One concerned resident has had enough and has written to the chief constable to bring the problem out.

He told the chief constable: 'They are extremely noisy and aggressive, their language is vile and obscene and anyone who protests is subject to horrendous abuse and threats.'

'The gang is out the streets most nights to around two or three in the morning. They have damaged cars, set buildings alight, smashed windows, and at least one young mother who protested has

been assaulted. 'We need help, not just rhetoric. Constable D. and Police Special Communities' Office are doing their best, but it is not enough. It is only a matter of time before someone is injured, or heaven help us, killed.'

The resident says the children need to be controlled or if not, their parents should be held responsible. He wants the situation 'ripped in the bud' and is supported by a number of other residents.

A spokesman for Neighbourhood Watch said: 'Much of the disorderly behaviour occurs in the early hours of the morning between midnight and 4am.'

'Local residents who have tried to communicate with the youngsters have been subjected to abuse and threats. Many are too frightened to complain or ring the police for fear of retaliation.'

These residents are calling for villagers to attend the next parish meeting at the offices in at 7.30pm

on Monday, May 14, to back his appeal for action.

The residents have also asked representatives from the police, the Estate, the Homes, Social Services and the Neighbourhood Watch to attend.

David, chairman of Parish Council, said that was on a regular basis the situation improved, but since he has been directed to share his time with policing at it had deteriorated.

He said: 'We are disappointed as the loss of the constable and we have written to the police about it.'

'The vandalism and behaviour problems have made life a misery at times for residents and it's not fair on them if should be allowed to continue.'

But he stressed that the actions of a few unruly youngsters did not reflect the majority of law abiding teenagers, many of whom were a credit to the village and were involved

in helping to improve its resources.

Mr F said that even though the council was limited with a £6,000 budget, it was doing all it could to support social projects such as the

conversion of the cricket pavilion to a youth centre, keeping the grass down in the park to encourage games and backing ambitious projects to bring a community centre and skateboard park to

help the police assured the Times that all on the police had been responded to by his officers.

He said: 'Clearly, there is a problem in involving a small number of youngsters and many of them would be known to PC and PCSO.'

'It is important that people know that this is not just the job of police providing patrols — people need to come forward and provide intelligence and evidence against the individuals, which will allow the police to pro-

secute and work with other agencies to provide Anti-Social Behaviour Orders on those responsible or even have them evicted if they are breaching tenancy agreements.

'I think it is positive there is a desire by the village to work with the police. I promise we will work closely with them and other agencies to deal with these issues.'

Inspector said that last year there were two police officers for and now there was one police officer and two PCSOs, an increase of 50% in manpower.

He assured residents there would be a police presence at the meeting to discuss what could be done to resolve the problems.

The actions of a few unruly youngsters do not reflect the majority of law abiding teenagers

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DISCIP

This report about Morton was mentioned by a number of people interviewed revealing the impact of the local press on local people's thoughts and views.

For example here Ali talks about the effects the report had on her:

A well it [the trouble] was alright for a bit like it was apparently a lot worse before, but it's got worse because there's not many people that go out any more so they've

got nothing else to do – it's actually quite bad by there –
there was a news report in the paper about it about how
bad it's got – it's not really that bad it's just kids being
little tykes

C it was in the Riversville paper wasn't it?

A yes that was a bit over the top mind you, yeah that was
over the top but there's still stuff that goes that
shouldn't really – shouldn't have to go on down there
and if there was stuff for them to do, it wouldn't happen

C so does the press affect the way you think about things?

A yeah it sort of gives us a bad name sort of thing just
'cos I come from Morton every one thinks you're like
that and I'm just like 'cos I know people, I've been
around people's houses and their parents say what's this
about Morton and they look at you as though you done
it – and you go, I don't go out in Morton any more

C so you all get labelled the same?

A yeah and it's wrong because there's only a certain
amount of people that do it, there's not everyone

Ali, interview 7-7-2007

There are many examples in the interview data of where 'stories' are told where
the reputation of the community is sullied. Here is a parent, relaying a story her
daughter told her from school:

L my daughter was telling me the day they were talking about places and she said her teacher – I think he might well have been winding her up a bit but her and Beth both took it very badly - there was one kid who said something like you should see what happens in Downland at night or whatever and another said Meeth's not much better and he piped up and said Morton well it's absolutely awful up there isn't it – so she said to me, why do people talk about Morton like it Mum – and it's the reputation

C and that was a teacher?

L that was her form tutor – I imagine he might have been winding her up but obviously it was on her mind – they didn't say about Lasham or Mayford or Braefield did he – no, Morton

Lucy Martin, Morton parent, interview 15-5-2007

An example of a more subtle event is recorded in the notes as of a Youth Issues Group meeting which was being held in a public space in Morton. The police officer responsible for links with the secondary school arrived late:

He dropped into a chair and with his eyebrows raised heavenwards reported he had just had to deal with an

aggrieved local taxi driver – who had just brought two girls from the secondary school. They left the taxi without paying. The police officer suggested, without saying as much, with his knowing smile and nod to others in the meeting that it was ‘business as usual in Morton’.

Youth Issues Group meeting, diary notes, 6-11-06

Diary notes from the meeting at the Youth Club also record the almost unspoken acknowledgement among the young people that coming from Morton was a problem for them:

Once the link with Morton [‘being a problem’] was acknowledged, the youngsters rattled on about this as if it were generally accepted – that the community link was taken for granted – ‘of course it’s an issue’, they said.

Diary notes, 20-11-2006

The Morton students who are regular school attendees gave a mixed and changing view about the effect of where they come from, when they are at school. Their accounts were full of inconsistencies. For example Marty, Jo and Ivor (interview, 18-1-2007) all said that coming from Morton made no difference ‘once you are in school’. However, in the same interview Jo said ‘sometimes we are treated differently by other kids, we are put down by other kids’ but the ‘teachers don’t notice, you are just another student’.

Lenny and Mike indicate the value of school for them to 'escape' from Morton:

- C but once you get here [in school] do those sorts of things out of your mind or are you thinking about it?
- M it's always at the back of your mind
- L the worse thing is when you go on the bus and I think oh I'm going back to a mess- when you come down in the morning you are so relieved you are going to see your mates – yeah it school but you can see who you like
- C so coming to school is a bit of a relief – that's interesting so it would be good if the trouble didn't come into school?
- L now and again it does
- C I remember you told me about an incident when someone told you to hit someone else on their behalf – but generally once you are here you can forget about it for a while?
- L there is one problem – if anything does happen in school, it will follow back up to Morton – so if anything happens, it will go up there – but anything that happens up there doesn't normally come down here.

Lenny and Mike, interview 13–6–2007

Lenny's story here suggests the escape from Morton is not complete. In other stories he relays that the troubles of Morton do sometimes follow them into school.

There are lots of other, perhaps more important markers than 'coming from Morton' at work that would be relevant to all students. For example Marty says 'if you are different you get pin pointed, some teachers pick on students, my PE teacher picked on me because of my size'. This suggests that 'difference' is marked out in different ways by both the teachers and the students, where you come from and how you look are just two examples.

It is important to acknowledge here that the Morton students interviewed are grouped because they share the same post code. They go to the same school but otherwise come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. They may well reflect the range of kinds of students in the school as a whole.

About the secondary school

Throughout the interview data there is negative talk in the village about the secondary school. Here is an example from the Head teacher of Morton primary school:

The staff, like me, are very defensive of the children and fiercely proud of what we do here but I would have to say I

have to work hard to keep them feeling positive when we hear constant reports about what our ex-students are ...[up to].

Well some of them are pretty vulnerable and I suppose in a small setting then, I'd like to think in a positive setting, they are nurtured, but clearly despite all their best efforts at Riversville College the nurturing element isn't there. It may not be there in any secondary school. I'm not saying Riversville should be singled out because any secondary school has by dint of its nature has got to be big, but it's so far removed isn't it from a small primary where all the staff, all the children know each other

Primary Head teacher, interview 15-5-2007

The head teacher is careful with her words here, but was clearly concerned by what happened to her students as they transferred to secondary school. Lucy Martin talks about school transfer too.

L When you've got six kids going into a school [Riversville College] that big – just very coincidentally and luckily for my daughter, the Scout group wound up and they moved the four remaining scouts to Braefield so she met all the kids that were moving to year six at Braefield before she went and three of them were in her form when she got there – three of the boys – so she

then knew people in her class you know, so the difference from coming from a primary school, (to a place) like Riversville, where how many kids do they put in a class?

C probably 12 classes with 30 children – so nearly 400

L so nearly 400 kids who all know each other already and they leave here, six or ten of them and they might know two or three other kids.

Lucy Martin, Morton parent, interview 15-5-2007

She is aware of the need for children to ‘know people’ before going to secondary school and highlights the role families play in making these connections. Lucy also expresses concerns about the transfer of year 6 students into Riversville College ‘I personally don’t think they give them very much support. They get a day down here but what I think they need to do, prior to going in, they need to meet the year 6 kids, they need to know these other children’ (15-5-2007). The importance of ‘knowing’ people is a recurrent theme in the data. Lucy’s concerns were echoed at a School Governors’ meeting which reported that ‘The Children’s Trust will fund work (for two years) to be done to improve transition – the greatest concern is with primary to secondary transition’ (Governor Meeting minutes, 20-5-2009). It would be interesting to follow the development of this work.

When talking about their experience of the move to secondary school, Lenny and Mike relayed what they had heard said about the school.

C so what sort of things do people say?

M what about this place?

C yes.

M it's big, and it's just like – you don't know where you're going when you start off.

C and would people say those things in school or just when they go home?

L oh it always happens really

C do people bad-mouth in school as well as when they get home?

L/M yes.

L I mean just mention Riversville once and no matter where you are they're bound to mouth off and they're not afraid to do it. Sometimes people get really obsessed over it they get really fierce like oh some one said...

C can you give my an example of where that happens?

L well say you come back on the bus and you're on the bus and you say "Oh school was really bad today" and then like someone will say "Yes I knew it was bad I

told you it's rubbish the teachers are horrible" and I say
"Calm down" and that's being said all the time.

C so that would be said by the kid who was in Morton and
hadn't gone to school or just as you're coming off the
bus?

L people who are on the bus, people who go to it say "Oh
I wish I didn't go to school today"...

C oh dear

L and people who don't go to school say it's rubbish they
don't want to go at all and they just won't go and
sometimes like without their parents knowing they walk
to the bus and then when the bus comes they walk
round the corner then as soon as it leaves they just hang
out after that.

C so there's a general sense that people are bad-mouthing
the place just about all the time.

L yes.

C is that your friends or older people or younger people or
everybody?

L basically everyone – I mean not younger ones – even
the Year 7's are starting to do it - bad mouth off.

Lenny and Mike, interview 17-7-2007

This last excerpt indicates the negative talk about school and one of the ways the stories are perpetuated in the community. There is also an important reminder that there are children in Morton who are not regularly attending school and they have an affect on those who do. There is mention too of the importance of the school bus which is an issue raised at the Youth Issues Group meeting (see Appendix 4), where Janine reported her efforts to improve the situation. The ‘problems with the bus’ was also discussed a Neighbourhood Renewal meeting (Diary notes 1-2-2005) and by Lucy Martin:

C is there still a lot of trouble on the bus?

L no, no, they eradicated – they actually make the trouble makers use the service bus and that’s that and they don’t let them back on the bus – the main trouble makers are banned from the school bus – they have the odd incident but, nothing in comparison – but when they [the secondary school Principal and Head of Year] came up – when I asked the Headmaster about the problem, he wasn’t that interested in discussing it – you didn’t feel like they [the Morton students] came from the school and they [the principal and Head of year] were terribly friendly and nice – I didn’t feel that – I just like – he said that problem will be sorted – to be fair maybe he was very optimistic and right or – I didn’t

feel you were allowed to discuss anything that you
thought might be an issue.

Lucy Martin, interview 15-5-2007

Lucy's comments are noteworthy here. She said the Principal didn't seem interested in 'the problem' and nothing was up for discussion.

In the discussion about school at the Youth Club, there was a great deal of negative talk about school, which was not surprising. However, even in this room full of very loud, negative almost hostile voices, there were a number of positive comments made about school.

Jo it's OK-nearly through it now

Marty OK – the sixth form is better, they trust you,
there's a change of attitude, no uniform

Adam I like school, especially PE

Lee some of it's OK

A surprising comment came from Dan who had been
'chucked out of school...because he swore at a teacher'. He

was on an 'alternative KS4 programme' with 4 days a week at a college and wanted to be back in school. He was very angry that he was not allowed back in school. He said 'they [the school] have always got in for us (Morton students) – others get more of a chance'.

Youth Club meeting, diary notes, 20-11-2006

About each other

There are also many examples of the 'separating discourse' used by the Morton students about others in Morton, others at school and students from other villages. Here are Jo and Ivor talking about other people in Morton

J yeah well we've like grown up together in the village,
but the people that move in to the village...

I twats in the...

J yeah they don't get on with the rest of us because we've
known each other so long we can stick together

I like old gits throw at us we just – all of us will just act
as a group and just chuck it right back at 'em

I once... there's new villagers and other people go off
with other people...

C there are lots of new houses aren't there?

I yeah it's stupid, just stupid there's too much

- J but the thing is they are not bringing new people up that
are getting people from urban cities that are proper
rough people up to Morton
- I proper little gangsters
- J yeah and then they wonder why Morton is such a shit
hole – sorry
- I vandalized – like there’s new people who live in the
new flats up at the terrace there’s a little kid in there
which is a little git...
- J and there’s that girl as well...
- I oh that little girl, ugh, she causes so much trouble it’s
unbelievable
- J yeah she said to Mike, will you go out with me, (which
is my brother) and he turned around and said no and she
was like I’ll f’ing smack you – then I said to her, if she
wants to hit my brother she’ll have to come through me
first.

Jo and Ivor, interview 25-1-2007

The labelling of others is frequent in their talk. Here Ivor calls the ‘incomers’ ‘proper little gangsters’ and his elderly neighbours’ ‘the old gits’. In other examples there is comparison with Downland, another village in the area with significant social problems. Ivor says ‘but if you come from Downland – talk

about inbreeding- then you've got real problems' (Interview 18-1-2007).

Labelling of others like this is very frequent in the talk of the Morton students.

It is within this context, living in a community that is spoken of in a generally negative way, experiencing deprivation and intense community division and attending a secondary school that is spoken of disparagingly, that the data collected in this research is presented. It is important to be reminded here that the students who were interviewed were regular school attendees who come from a community where a significant number of young people are not good school attendees. There is a range of 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1982) at work on them in their community of place. So it could be argued that these students are the young people who are, or whose families are the ones who have somehow overcome these exclusionary forces. The *social* role school plays in the lives of these young people who do attend school regularly would seem to be of great significance.

Chapter 5: Discussion of data

Introduction

This is a case study, so discussion of the findings needs to acknowledge the contextual limits of the data. However, there are some important issues emerging from this data which are relevant to wider studies of the role of schooling in young people's lives. These emerging issues can be understood at a micro, local and national level. Microlevel is used to mean the level of interactions between individuals in schools, local level is the level at which the school is operating within its locality and national level is the role of schools in the lives and futures of young people in a national social and economic framework.

During the period of the research, a 'sensitivity' to discourse has been maintained (Willig, 1999) and specific examples from the data will be used in this discussion. The role discourse plays in forming views and attitudes cannot be underestimated. Lather (1994) declares that discourse 'words the world'. The language we use in our thoughts and speech, construct those very thoughts and speech. Words are the tools we use for thinking and the words we use in our discourse tend always to channel discussions along predictable furrow (Thomas and Loxley, 2001). The methodology of this research, the conceptual tools and the vocabulary, all encourage particular thinking in both the researcher and the reader. Conceptualisation of the context of this study and all the individuals involved, by the reader, will be determined by the way words are used in the report.

Discourse also plays an important part in anchoring spatial organisations in cultural practice (Armstrong, 2000) keeping things in their place. Foucault (1982) says the key to understanding how society is ordered is to study how human beings are made subjects through discourse and practices. Language constructs differences by using of labels (Armstrong, 2000; Booth, 1995; Corbett, 1996). Labelling results in the production of stereotypes, allowing the 'other' to be firmly fixed elsewhere.

Part 1. Students' views on the role of schools in their lives

School as a place for social encounters

The overwhelming sense gained from listening to the students is that school is seen as primarily a social place, a place where they make friends and enemies, meet with friends and deal with disagreements. Lenny is glad to leave Morton to go to school:

The worse thing is, when you go on the bus and think, oh I'm going back to a mess, when you come down in the morning you are so relieved you are going to see your mates, yeah it's school but you can see who you like.

(Lenny, 13-6-2007).

For the small group of young people from Morton, social opportunities in their home community are limited by amongst other things, small numbers of young people and lack of provision of suitable 'meeting spaces'. Similar situations are

recorded across rural areas of the UK (Fabes et al., 1983; Shucksmith, 2000; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2005). In all the interviews with young people, the social aspect of their school experience dominates the conversation. School was seen as a place for connections and relationships. Jo would 'rather come to school than sit at home on my own' (18-1-2007).

The central importance of friendships in schooling is being increasingly recognised in the literature – with friendship being framed generally in terms of human capital theory, particularly social capital (e.g. Feinstein et al., 2008; Lahelma, 2002; Lupton et al., 2008). The work of the 'Wider Benefits of Learning' (WBL) research group, reported by Feinstein et al. (2008), identifies friendships as a key factor in school and wider social 'success' and school is recognised as a place where friendships are formed (Lupton et al., 2008) and also a place that enemies are made – certainly a place where relationships of all kinds between students are developed and lived out.

There are only small numbers of young people in Morton. There were only six students in Mike and Lenny's year group at Primary school and they transferred together to secondary school. Lenny talks of the frustrations that 'there aren't enough people from a certain year group at the moment to make a football team' (16-5-2007). The youth worker reports that it's common to see 'Young people in Morton socialising in mixed age groups, little ones hanging around with grown men' (Pat Drew, 15-1-2008). The data show that young people

from Morton who do not attend school remain in social groups restricted to Morton but do mix with the school attendees out of school time:

They are separate in the sense that they are around during the day... but when they are all in the park, they are altogether...not segregated from anybody else, once the other kids are home.

Lucy Martin, (15-5-2007).

There was also talk of the 'closely knit' nature of the groups in Morton, 'we've known each other so long we stick together' (Jo, 25-1-2007). Ivor and Jo reveal the separation this can lead to- 'all of us will just act as a group and just chuck it right back at 'em' (Jo and Ivor, 25-1-2007). Fights between the groups are not uncommon 'because there's two groups of people and because they are so close, that's why I think in a bigger village they'd keep apart and there wouldn't be so many fights because they are so close, they are compact, there's like no way they won't bang into each other' (Lenny, 16-5-2007) although Ivor assures us it is 'not like Romeo and Juliet' (18-1-2007).

Mike and Lenny talk of the value of knowing more people in school, 'the most popular...walk around at lunchtime with their big group of mates, they just get on' (Mike, 17-7-2007). Lenny links 'not getting bullied' with knowing lots of people and there are benefits from coming from somewhere big because:

You know a lot of people, then you're like in your locality in college and you're like happy there already. Then you like say to everyone, I know year 10, I know year 11 and they automatically think, Oh he knows a lot of people, I'll hang out with him and eventually it just piles on.

(Lenny, 17-7-2007)

So coming from Morton, with small numbers, may be a significant disadvantage from Mike and Lenny's perspective. The importance of the secondary school as a place to make connections with peers is clear. It is also important to acknowledge these connections may not always be beneficial. Lenny, Mike, Ali and Jo were all in trouble at school for their behaviour.

Research done by the 'Wider Benefits of Learning' research centre, framed by social capital theory (Feinstein et al., 2008) resonates with the emerging themes from this study. For example Lupton et al. (2008) show that school is an important place to make friends and in-school networks of friends are more diverse than out-of-school networks. Jo said she had 'friends from all over' (25-1-2007), and so may well benefit in social capital terms, from being associated with students from different places and family backgrounds. The Morton students who contributed to this work came from the same community but from a range of different home backgrounds, so differ in social capital terms. There is a growing body of literature which uses social capital theory to analyse the social interactions of young people. For example, Helve and Bynner (2007)

draw together a collection of contemporary writing which includes a number focussed on schooling. They identify that it is during late childhood and adolescence that close interpersonal relationships such as parents, siblings and friends can operate as important sources of social capital. It is interesting that teachers were not mentioned as important at all (Nurmi, 2007).

The significance of being prepared for the social aspects of secondary schooling was recorded by Lucy Martin, the Morton parent interviewed. She had gone to significant efforts to get her daughter to Scouts in a nearby village, so she would know others going to the secondary school (Lucy Martin, 15-5-2007). The value of friends in this transition from primary to secondary school is also noted by Lenny and Mike (17-7-2007), who both agreed that knowing each other had helped with the move. For Lenny, having an older brother already at the school was also clearly a benefit (16-5-2007).

In her work on school transitions, Weller (2007) argues that it is 'particularly important that the implications of schooling as a social encounter are fully acknowledged in policy debates and initiatives' (p. 124). The importance of school as a social place was only recognised by some of the adults interviewed in school and all of these were support staff. Steve North, the Learning Mentor and Jill Carter, the lunchtime assistant were acutely aware of the intensity of the social side of school life and expressed concern for the welfare of students who do not manage it:

Gossip, social time, slagging off, it's vital and students thrive on it. It's as important as lessons – enjoying this – but students who don't, won't or can't engage in all of this get isolated, disconnected.

(Steve North, 18-7-2007).

Steve North and Julie Carter, together with Barbara Lind from Student Support Services, were also aware that for some students, the unstructured time out of lessons was problematic 'there's plenty of places for them to go and hang out with friends, but that's OK for the ones who are capable of doing that, for the ones who are struggling socially and are nervous and everything else, it's hard, really, really hard' (Jill Carter, 2-7-2007). The intensity of the social encounters of students in schools is well documented (Thompson, 2001). There are powerful rules that govern group life, some of which result in social cruelty and exclusion (p. 21), awareness of this is essential in developing an understanding of inclusion and exclusion in schools.

The intensity of the student's social relations seem to spill over into classroom situations that then emerge as problem behaviour, fights etc. Jo's audio diary excerpts shows how her social life spills into the classroom and then brings her into conflict with staff. She uses all sorts of strategies for managing the inevitable confrontation which she sees herself as 'winning'. She resists, with defiance, all attempts to conform. Lenny gives graphic details of classroom fights which result from feuds between groups of students—he seems to relish

these opportunities to transgress the boundary patrolled by teacher 'control' of student behaviour.

Lahelma's (2002) study of secondary schools also showed that the 'invasions of the informal on the official agenda form a recurrent source of conflict between teachers and (some) students' (p. 379). She argues that 'teachers are bound to fail in their efforts to keep the informal (social) outside of lessons' (p. 379). Education practitioners and researchers should look for ways to see young people's need to interact with each other as a resource rather than as a disturbance. The social element of schooling should therefore be acknowledged and accommodated pedagogically and spatially in schools (Gordon et al., 2000) and in addition, perhaps teachers asked to accept that not all students have academic learning as their priority in school (Harris and Ruddock, 1993). The implications of this for schools are discussed in the next chapter.

Some students 'don't, can't or won't' (Steve North, 18-7-2007) navigate their way through this complex social world. The social exclusion of Robert is an example. Lenny and Mike's reports suggest that Robert was included in his mainstream primary school but have watched him slide into exclusion at secondary school (interview, 17-7-2007). They see him as 'a kind guy, he wouldn't hurt a fly'. As he transferred to secondary school with the small group of year 6 students from Morton, he was assigned to 'bottom sets', and time with the Learning Support team. Lenny says 'he sort of shut down when he got here, he went into a corner with other people'. Lenny links Robert's social isolation

to the split in the tutor group they are both in: 'Our tutor is sort of divided, it's like people who like sport and people who like – sort of other things'. He says Robert 'don't do sport and stuff and he's a bit overweight as well, so – means he's picked on'. Mike links Robert's separation to the fact he was in the 'not popular' group – 'Robert got in with the kids who didn't talk much and he dropped out sort of thing'. This unwillingness to talk to people is a real problem for Lenny: 'if you talk to people that's good but it's not talking to people when they ask you something and you just ignore them, makes you unpopular'. Robert's social skills have him 'marked out', with Foucault's coercive markers. His not liking sport and his unwillingness to talk separate him from the social melee of his peer group. Lenny says 'I suppose he is happy in lessons but when there are no teachers about at say lunchtime, he knows there's more chance for him to get bullied again so he tries to get in a group' (17-7-2007). He may well appear in the group of students mentioned by the lunchtime assistant, who stay close to her at lunchtimes 'the ones who are struggling socially and are nervous' (Jill Carter, 2-7-2007). Robert's exclusion from mainstream classes as a result of the 'dividing practices' associated with his learning difficulties is compounded by his exclusion from the social scene. Success at the secondary school is measured by academic and sporting achievement (see School's Vision Statement, Appendix 5) and the Morton students' measure social success with 'popularity' (see Lenny and Mike's comments in Chapter 4). Robert fails to score on all of these. He doesn't seem able to resist the inevitability of the slide into the 'other' world of 'Learning Support', struggling academically with contingent physical and social separation.

The descriptions given by the Morton students concur with that of a study undertaken by a group of school student researchers with Gunter and Thompson (2007). Their study, which looked at the exclusionary nature of bullying practices in a school, also focussed on students who attended school regularly in order to develop an understanding of the exclusionary forces operating within the institution. They too identified 'daily practices of inclusion and exclusion between and within groups of students that affect school experience' (p. 184). The complexity of this social world is a source of apparent pleasure for some students but for others a source of the 'petty cruelties' (Foucault, 1991 p. 308) of school life.

Acknowledgement of the central significance of the school as a social place is not recorded in data collected from interviews with school managers and from the reading of school policy documents. The discourse there is soaked in the language of the 'standards agenda' and concerns about attendance and behaviour. The importance of school as a social place is only acknowledged in this study by the support staff, working 'on the ground'. The perspective from their 'in between' position is very valuable and the value of this perspective will be discussed further in the final chapter.

School as a place for learning

There is acknowledgement by the Morton students both explicitly and implicitly that they see school as a place for learning and qualifications. Lenny wants to go to school 'because of my education and I want a good life' (16-5-

2007). Jo and Ivor, preparing to do their final exams are focussed on qualifications as an end point. Ivor wants to go into the Sixth form 'to get A levels' (18-1-2007) and Jo needs the grades 'to get to the CFE' (College of Further Education) (25-1-2007). They share their anger and frustrations about what they perceive to be teachers' lack of control, fairness and poor classroom management:

Like my maths teacher was...I'd like talk to my mate about work and then he'd send me out and then you see LT sitting there, mucking around chucking paper aeroplanes and sir would just say stop it L – it's just something about teachers not liking students and the ones they can control, the ones they know they can break and those they can't.

(Ivor, 25-1-2007)

and the lack of recognition of the needs of all students in a class:

Because you have like 30 children in a class, the people that sit in the front the really snobby people and we sit at the back and he'll just like – he'll just talk to them look at them and then explain and we all have our hands up at the back and he wouldn't care and that's happened loads of times. I've said look, I have put my hand...

so if they know people are going to fail, fair enough if they mess around you don't want to waste your time on them but there's people who do actually just need help in general and want it but they just don't want to

(Jo, 25-1-2007)

The Morton students also perceive that the school's focus is on the most able: 'teachers have favourites – only value good ones' (Marty, 18-1-2007). Lenny, Mike and Ali express their frustration with poor behaviour in classes and with teachers who do not seem to care. They seem to desire more connection, relationship with teachers. Mike speaks fondly of his science teacher who controls the class, gives good lessons, does not shout and takes an interest in her students (13-6-2007). One of the few positive things Ali says about school is about her new form teacher who 'seems like a really nice guy, he's just nice, quiet and doesn't shout at you' (7-7-2007). Lenny enjoys his connection with Mr T the PE teacher and the connections made with his brother and is sad that he 'can't seem to have good friends, you know, with other teachers' (17-7-2007). Steve North, the Learning Mentor notes that 'enjoyment of lessons' connects staff and students and 'teachers who build the relationships, firm up the connections' (18-7-2007), suggesting staff and students can connect through their shared enjoyment of successful lessons.

There is clearly an overlap in the aspirations of the Morton students and the teachers here, a place for connection. The school's vision statement identifies

academic achievement as a priority and the teachers and students share the desire for school as a place for learning. What seems to be missing for the students interviewed in this study is communication with their teachers about this shared aspiration. The Morton students were having significant experience of political engagement in their community through the work they were doing at the Youth Club. They were clearly able to articulate their views and aspirations for the community and were significantly involved in the Neighbourhood Renewal process (for example, see Youth Issues Group meetings minutes in Appendix 4). This seems to be in stark contrast to the degree of agency they were experiencing in their learning at school. The possibilities here for connections between students and teachers will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Part 2. Discussion of other findings

School as a layered place

It is clear from the interviews with students and school staff that the school is a 'highly striated and sedentary' (Patton, 2000). The 'official school' (Gordon et al., 2000) has its own range of hierarchical relations established by systems, policies and practice. The social relations of the students seem to operate in a separate layer which is closely controlled and regulated with its own rules (Youdell, 2006). The boundaries between the Morton students and the school staff seemed well entrenched. Lenny says teachers 'would be the last option' (13-6-2007) if you needed to talk to someone in school and Jo says it's only

worth approaching teachers for help if 'they know you' (25-1-2007). There is an argument for looking for possible points of connection, places where the boundaries can be tested, stretched or perhaps transgressed, which would offer opportunities to see inclusion differently in a school. From the data, sport would seem to offer such opportunities for connection, Jo, Lenny and Mike put PE and sport on their list of positive things about school. Researching why sport offers opportunity for connections between students and teachers would be of value.

Individual actions, by teachers in their daily practice are unlikely to provide many opportunities for change at a systemic level but there are opportunities at a microlevel beginning with individual teachers reflecting on their connections with students (Benjamin, 2002). Lenny's PE teacher, Mr T, and Mike's science teacher clearly, offer significant points of connection. At a more systematic, institutional level, Allan (2008) argues for a Deleuzian 'deterritorialisation' of the sorts of spaces in a school which students and staff inhabit, 'a performative breaking of existing codes' (p. 63) – which 'attack the rigid, striated spaces of schooling' (p. 63).

There were adults interviewed at the school who were aware of the separate layers in the school inhabited by teachers and students, whose individual actions successfully made connections between the layers. Barbara Lind, the Student Support Services officer, identifies her role as a helpful connection between students and teachers (interview 1-5-2007). The students certainly saw

her as one of the few adults in school they could talk to. She might be considered a 'boundary worker' (Giroux, 2005), operating as a member of staff in the school, but linking directly with students on a personal level, recognising the importance of issues other than academic ones in the students' lives. Her understanding of the impact of students' emotional and social needs on their educational success is crucial and she can identify how the basic institutional structures in the school need adjusting to reduce suffering (Giroux, 2005). The perspective of these support staff members, again offers valuable insights.

School as an inclusive place

Graham and Slee (2008) ask that research about inclusion should be about 'making visible and deconstructing the centre from which all exclusions derive' (p. 279). This research set out to interrogate the inner workings of a secondary school to shed some light onto the 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1982 p. 208) and exclusionary mechanisms operating there. The students give insights into the elements of schooling of which they are aware. They talk primarily of other students but also make reference to teachers, school buildings, lessons, exams, student services and administration systems such dinner money and registration. Not surprisingly, they make no explicit mention of whole school policy or initiatives, such as the 'Inclusion Policy' and 'Vision Statement', but they do comment on internal exclusion procedures (ECR), attendance monitoring and changes to rules about leaving the school site.

Members of the formal layer of schooling, the teachers, managers and policy makers, have a different perspective and this dominates their talk about the affects of school on students' lives and the effects of students on the school. The school's Inclusion Policy (see Appendix 3), is primarily about extreme 'special needs' and attendance. The Assistant Principal referred to inclusion as a 'nightmare' (8-2-2007). Inclusion, in her view was about disabled students and others categorised as having 'special educational needs': 'there are no special schools left, no experts left – the specialised services are no longer around', for autistic children in mainstream for example or other 'troublesome students'. She was also bothered by the detrimental effect of these disruptive students in lessons: 'I agree with the principle (of inclusion) but the working practice means the life of educators is very difficult and this imposes on other students, the students them selves and staff', these 'young people are being included in a community college despite disability or behaviour that *should* exclude them' (emphasis by researcher). Reflecting on her experience as a class teacher, it was clear that she saw that 'the pressure to get the grades does not sit comfortably with inclusion'. The Principal also took the view that there were students who really should not be at the school. There were 'special schools, where these 'different, young people who don't fit can go'. Both school leaders consider inclusion as a response to the 'broadening of the current education system to embrace those previously unable to take part' (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008 p. 18) – where as in fact the demographic of this school intake has not changed over the period of the last 10 years as identified by OFSTED inspection reports (school OFSTED report 2009).

The Principal makes frequent reference to 'the norm', for example he talked of 'the small group moving away from the more affluent successful others. Can we have them in the norm group now? Now they are getting so far away?' (7-6-2007). Foucault sees 'normalisation' as part of the disciplinary power operating on individuals, to ensure they are 'trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded etc.' (Foucault 1977 p. 191). This disciplinary power acts against plurality (Veck, 2006). Normalisation, as part of the disciplinary power, acts to ensure there are 'certain patterns of behaviour, so that those who do not keep the rules could be considered asocial or abnormal' (Arendt, 1958 p. 42). There is also mention of the issues in Morton and says 'they obviously have a problem up there', they are considered abnormal. The Principal locates 'them', 'up there' (the residents of Morton) as separate from the school. The words of the Principal resonate with those of the parent from Morton, Lucy Martin who commented, after attending a meeting in Morton with the Principal, 'you didn't feel like they [the Morton children] came from the school' (15-5-2007). Responsibility for the problems such as attendance and the school bus is linked to the problems of families in Morton, which it could be argued is 'an inevitable result of a neo-liberal view of schooling which individualises disruption, failure and marginalisation and blames individuals for their social disadvantage and dislocation' (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008 p. 22).

Attendance

The attendance data show that poor attendance was an issue for the whole school, with a small number of communities, including Morton, with significant

numbers of students with poor attendance. It was clear that, during the period of the research, there were concerted efforts being made in school to improve attendance and reduce formal exclusions, which were contingent with a response from the Local Authority on attendance and exclusion data from Riversville College (Governor Meeting minutes 3-10-2007). The students had noticed changes, Marty said 'it's like a prison with the new perimeter fence' (18-1-2007) and Ali was cross that lunch passes 'got banned' (7-7-2007). It was now harder to get out of school 'but you can get out if you really want to' (Ali 7-7-2007).

When the research began, concern was expressed in a Neighbourhood Renewal meeting of a culture of poor school attendance amongst the young people from Morton. This concern was the trigger for a systematic analysis of the school attendance data. There is evidence in the data that this is the case. There are clearly a significant number of Morton students with poor attendance. Ali admits she truant 'very occasionally – I might do one lesson a week – sometimes I don't skive at all'. She described 'the years that's just left – they used to come into school and not go to school sort of thing –they'd do that for a whole week maybe. Lots of people skived a lot'. It was on one of these days out of school that Janine 'got caught by the police' (Ali, 7-7-2007). Lenny reports there are young people who wait at the bus stop and encourage others to stay off school:

I was trying to get on the bus the other day and this guy came up to me – don't go to school today and I said what do you mean? – come and have a day off with me and I said I can't because of my education and I want a good life but he went don't mind, I'll get someone else.

(Lenny, 16-5-2007).

Evidence from interviews with the youth worker, Police officer and Parish Councillor all noted that in Morton there was 'problem with non-attendeess' hanging around Morton during the day and the 'people who miss the [school] bus on purpose' (Morton Parish Councillor, 29-6-2007). There was clearly a perception that there were a significant number of young people hanging around in Morton during the day, who should have been at school.

School attendance has received much government attention since publication of the Audit Commission's report 'Missing Out' in 1999 (Audit Commission, 1999) which expressed concern about the numbers of young people nationally, who do not attend school regularly. There is now a National Attendance Strategy, a key component of the Government's strategy to raise educational standards, (DCSF, 2008). In this strategy, poor school attendance is linked with increased risk of difficulties with employment and involvement with crime. There is also a stress placed on the responsibility on parents to make sure their children attend school which is included in the guidance on the legal measures available to secure school attendance in the document, Ensuring Children's

Rights to Education (DCSF, 2007b). The increased risk to young people, of poor school attendance is highlighted by Feinstein, Budge et al. (2008), in part of the WBL study. For example, they show that poor achievement in school raises the level of risk for young people. But when poor achievement is coupled with poor engagement, which they measure by truancy from school, the risk of ill health in adulthood is multiplied by 4.5 times (p. 120). Their studies also show that attitude to school may be almost as important to future health outcomes as attainment. Teenagers who do not do well academically yet regularly attend school have better health as adults than truants with the same low level qualifications (p. 140).

Southwell (2006) argues that truancy from school is a response to unmet need for which attendance data can be used as a useful indicator. There is certainly evidence from this study of the usefulness of school data analysis as a tool for determining attendance patterns for communities as well as for individuals. Southwell expresses concern that responsibility for poor attendance is now firmly situated in the family and 'defective parents' (p. 91) which he argues takes the focus away from the failures of schools to meet the needs of students. There is also concern expressed that focus on attendance data by governments and local authorities has led to 'massaging' of data by schools (Reid, 2002), and a focus away from key issues such as the appropriateness of curriculum and pedagogy (Reynolds et al., 1980). Researchers, Southwell argues, have been complicit in this, ignoring the narratives of truants themselves who invariably link their truancy with problems with teachers (p. 93). From the stories in this

study, it is clear that the Morton students who attend school 'blame' the school for their problems. Reporting findings from school research like this, which indicate deep structural and systematic flaws within institutions, does give researchers ethical dilemmas and a further discussion of these dilemmas appears in Chapter 6.

The school bus

From the data it is clear that one of the 'barriers' to attending school for the Morton students, is the school bus. There are two buses, one going from either end of the village and the journey to school takes about 45 minutes. Some students from outlying farms and hamlets are brought by mini-bus to meet the buses in Morton. All the students interviewed and Morton parents mentioned the problems on the school buses. The fights on the bus are graphically detailed by Lenny. The issue was discussed at a Youth Issues Group meeting (see minutes in Appendix 3) and Community Partnership meeting (Diary notes, 1-2-2005) and the bus was cited by one parent, as the reason for his daughter not going to school: 'she hates the bus' (John Seccombe, 7-12-2007). This journey to school might be considered as one of the daily 'petty cruelties' (Foucault, 1991) that young people go through in the school day, a 'dividing practice' (Foucault, 1982), that separates those who can manage it and those who cannot.

From the data it is suggested that the motivation to get on the school bus from Morton may, for some students, be primarily linked to the promise of social activity when they arrive in Riversville. For some this social activity will be in

school, for others this will be in the shadows of the town before returning to Morton at the end of the day. They 'walk out and go to the park for the whole day' (Ali, 7-7-2007). For those not drawn by the promise of social or learning activity, the bus offers another reason not to go to school.

School as a place of transformation

A sub-text of this research has been the role school plays in the wider community from which the students come. As discussed in Chapter 2, great importance has been placed on the role of schools in neighbourhood regeneration. Schools, education and training are cited as key to the development of individuals, families and communities. In human capital terms, an increasingly well educated population leads to an improved workforce which leads to economic growth (Ball, 2008). Academic achievement and preparation for work are included in the aims of this school, as expressed in the school's Vision Statement. (Appendix 5). As discussed in Chapter 2, the view that schools can offer a reliable way out of disadvantage and that the effects of family and community background can be overcome by the intervention of schools, is eminently open to challenge (Cummings and Dyson, 2007).

From data collected outside the school, there is evidence of great expectations about what can be done by the school to change the situation for students from Morton. For example, parents, students, the youth worker and members of the Community Partnership expected the school to sort out the problems on the bus. Lucy Martin was disappointed that the principal 'wasn't interested in discussing

it' (15-5-2007) and at a Youth Issues Group meeting 'all agreed that the problem [on the buses] points to a solution that the school must attend to' and that 'the school must also be responsive to transport [bus] criminal damage issues on the buses' (Youth Issues Group meeting minutes, 21-3-2007). The youth worker was particularly concerned that 'the school seemed to be taking no notice' of what was going on in Morton' (15-1-2008) and members of the LSP and the Parish Councillor were disappointed that 'no-one from the secondary (or primary) school was in attendance at the Local Strategic Partnership meetings' (Parish Councillor, 29-6-2007).

It was clear that there were great expectations of the 'transformative' role the school was to play, from those outside school. This 'transformation' was seen in terms of improved attendance, transport and reduction in problems with the 'non-attendees who were causing trouble in the village and for the police' (Parish Councillor, 29-6-2007). There is no evidence in the data that the school leaders were engaging with the any of the areas expected by those in Morton. The Assistant Principal said she was invited to Morton meetings but did not go as 'there was no evidence of real problems there' (Assistant Principal, 8-2-2007). This discrepancy in expectation might well be the source of some of the frustration witnessed on both sides. As detailed in Governor meeting minutes, the school leaders were focussed on in-school issues such as improving attendance, reducing exclusions and 'raising standards' (Governor Meeting Minutes, 20-5-2009). The focus on standards by the school leaders is not unexpected. Ball (2008) argues that with schools exposed to market forces such

as competition and performance, it will be inevitable that schools 'become induct(ed) into a culture of self interest with an increased orientation towards the internal well being of the institution...and a shift away from concern with more general social and educational issues within the community' (p. 45). As the Assistant Principal said 'the pressure to get grades does not sit comfortably with inclusion' (8-2-2007).

It is important to note that the Morton students shared in the aspiration for 'academic achievement'. It was one of the reasons given for coming to school. Ivor wants 'a good education, with A levels' (18-1-2009) in order to go into the RAF. Jo left school (July 2008) with the grades she needed to get to City College (report from her father, diary notes 10-10-2008) and Janine is 'trainin 2 b a chef at city college...love it' (Janine's Bebo message, accessed 27-7-2009). Marty is at school, in the sixth form because he 'couldn't get into college, didn't get the grades, which was the school's fault'. For the Morton students who gained academic qualifications, school provided the opportunity for 'transformation' in their lives. Their human capital has been increased by their school experience. For Marty, failure at GCSEs means he is still at school and his 'friends have gone, it's very lonely' (18-1-2007). Marty does not seem to have had the same benefits from his school experience as Jo and Ivor. Marty's lack of academic success has brought associated social consequences. In addition to qualifications, school has given the Morton students a wider network of connections, although Robert (and Marty) may disagree. Robert's social exclusion in school may well have led to a decreased number of social

connections as he 'shut down sort of thing' (Lenny, 17-7-2007) on transfer into secondary school. It was reassuring to know that 'he has started to get more friends now, he's gone on a trip with like Mr North and people are like asking him to talk and that' (Mike 17-7-2007). School clearly offers opportunities for connections with peers and these connections can be seen to accrue benefits in social capital terms. Macmurray would argue, more fundamentally, that these human connections are an essential part of our humanity (Macmurray, 1958) and their importance should not be underestimated in institutions such as schools.

The many young people in Morton disconnected from schooling, do not get the benefits of the human connections, wider social networks and qualifications that school offers and so become more separated, socially and economically from the system and possibly from the students who do attend. It would be interesting to follow up on the young people in this study and those who do not go to school, to see how their lives unfold in the future.

Chapter 6: Findings

Part 1. Informing practice

Inclusion and schooling

This research was about a school and inclusion. It is argued that there are inherent contradictions when considering the concepts of inclusion and schooling together.

The 'inclusive educational project' has clearly run into difficulties and 'progress is in peril' (Reiser, 2006). At the heart of this difficulty is 'the problem of language and meaning' (Slee, 2001). There are evidently difficulties with the language about inclusion and representation of individuals (Corbett, 1996, Slee, 2001). The lack of words and the search for new ones has been seen as a barrier to progress. Spivak (1997) cautions against inventing new languages to escape problems 'to make a new word is to run the risk of forgetting the problem or believing it solved (Spivak, 1997 p. xv). Continuing to use the term inclusion, with all its complications, will act as 'both a limit and a resource, opening it up to the margins' (Lather, 2003 p. 263). The work of this research has been at 'the margins', developing understanding of the exclusionary forces operating in a school by 'repositioning' (Apple, 2001) the analytical framework using voices from the margins to interrogate the inner workings of the school system. Being on the edge offers a perspective that can challenge traditional hierarchies (Foucault, 1988), a place for oppositional and transformative consciousness' (Giroux, 2005 p. 25).

This research set out to explore different ways of thinking and talking about inclusion and schooling, to conceive of schools where all young people feel safe, valued and successful. Slee sees inclusion as:

an aspiration for a democratic education and, as such, the project of inclusion addresses the experiences of all students at school (Slee, 2001 p. 168)

In this final chapter some 'openings for debate' (Allan, 2008) will be presented on a way forward for inclusion, sharing Slee's 'aspiration for a democratic education', whilst recognising the importance of young people's views on their lives in school. The value of seeing human relationships at the centre of schooling will be explored along with how a focus on the members of a school community and their views on what goes on there, can help in the re-envisioning of schools as person centred places. Allan (2008) argues that a search out from inclusion's current 'territories of failures', the 'nightmare' for the Assistant Principal at Riversville, will not be straightforward and advocates the engagement of all in education with philosophers. Teachers, policy makers, managers, writers and researchers should not be limited by the pragmatism of a 'what works' approach but be prepared for risks, ruptures and experiments.

The social and schooling

The Neighbourhood Renewal programme which Morton is undergoing emphasises the role of education and schooling in the transformation of young people's lives. In Chapters 2 and 5, it was argued that seeing schools as transformative is problematic. The young people from Morton experience a range of exclusionary forces contingent with their community's socio-economic status, geographical separation and the long standing mythologies associated with the place they live in. Ali alludes to the 'coercive markers' (Allan, 1999a p. 46) this negative view of Morton gives those who attend school:

In school other people like you will get labelled because they know you're like students from Morton or somewhere else like Downland for example—you get labelled—not labelled – but you get a load more grief because you come from there sort of thing.

Ali, interview 7-7-2007

This study has interrogated these 'coercive markers' and contingent divisive practices, through listening to the Morton students giving accounts of their lived experience of secondary school.

A continued focus on the importance of schooling is important not because of the potential for transformation but for the social role of schools. This research shows that school clearly plays a crucial *social* role in the lives of the young

people from Morton. The importance of the social role schools play in the lives of the students needs to be acknowledged by all members of the school community. This requires that everyone acknowledges and considers each other's presence and humanity in every day school encounters.

Schools are the most significantly funded resource for young people. They are seen to be the 'hub' for delivery of services to young people and their families through the development of extended schools (DfES, 2005a). An evaluation of the early stages of these initiatives show some cases where schools are working effectively as part of a network of community agencies in sustained efforts to address disadvantage (Cummings et al., 2005; Dyson et al., 2002) and the recent Government white paper (DCSF, 2009b) promotes this kind of co-operation between all agencies working in a community. Sustained co-operation between schools and agencies may well offer a new model of schooling but schools remain central to the delivery of education. If young people do not go to school, like many of the young people in Morton, excluded through a range of reasons and circumstances, they become disconnected not just from education and their peers but also this wider set of resources for which they are eligible, including the opportunity for greater social contact and social capital building.

The centrality of human relations in school

Listening to the young people talk of their experiences in school reveals the central importance of relationships in school: the relationships between and

within the student groups and relationships with adults in the school. School is 'a place to see mates'. Students cite good teachers as those they can communicate with and who relate to them, teachers they can connect with. Lenny and Mike reveal the way in which Robert has become separated, excluded because he loses his connections to other students.

Not having any friends was a problem for Robert. He managed at primary school but Lenny knew from their experience of the intensity of the human interaction of the year 6 'induction day' and the huge numbers of students, that 'he's not going to make it' (Lenny 17-7-2007). Riversville college is to focus on development of its transition arrangements for all students moving up from primary school (Governor meeting minutes 20-5-2009), acknowledging the significance of this event in young people's lives and re-emphasizing the social (Weller, 2007). This research shows that this transition is a key moment for students and their development of connections amongst peers. Moving to secondary school offers opportunities for new encounters and connections but is also a time for disconnection from primary school teachers and friends. The importance of 'friends' in this transition is recognised by Morton parent, Alice Martin who organised for her daughter to attend Scouts, so that she would get to know people with whom she would be going to secondary school. Lenny and Mike agree that having each other and for Lenny having a big brother, all helped with going to secondary school.

Schools need to acknowledge the significance of this transition from primary school to secondary school, in young people's lives. Transition arrangements should have an emphasis on the social (Weller, 2007). This would suggest there needs to be a number of opportunities for extended periods of time for year 6 and year 7 students to meet new peers and their teachers, in new spaces which are not dominated by the curriculum, where people get to know each other through shared engagement (Fielding, 2007).

Human relations appear at the very heart of the experiences that connect the young people with school. Michael Fielding uses the writing of John Macmurray to re-envision education with humans at the centre. Their focus on the centrality of human relations resonates with the approach to this research and the researcher's way of seeing the world. They help throw light deep into the heart of schooling, illuminating the central importance of the relations of the humans there. Macmurray (1958) argues that education is about 'learning to be human' and that we learn to become persons in and through our relations with each other and through community:

The first principle of human nature is mutuality... This principle that we live by entering into relation with one another, provides the basic structure with which all human experience falls, whether individual or social. For this reason the first priority in education – if by education we mean learning to be human – is learning to live in community. I call

this the first priority because failure in this is fundamental failure, which cannot be compensated for by success in other fields; because our ability to enter into fully personal relations with others is the measure of our humanity, for inhumanity is precisely that perversion of human relations... (A)ny kind of teaching involves establishing personal relations between teacher and pupil and the success or failure of the teaching depends very largely upon the character and quality of the relation. (Macmurray, 1958 pp. 5-6)

For Macmurray, community is a 'unity of persons as persons', so education, for Macmurray, is about learning to live together well. Jo, Ivor and Lenny speak of the value of 'knowing people' in school:

I like you've got connection with people, which just helps you out of the ...

J if you don't know them, you don't know how to get to know them

Jo and Ivor 25-1-2007

Fielding (2007) argues that contemporary education policy based on 'performativity' with its framework of targets and standards is fundamentally exclusionary because it does not recognise the humanity within a school. He

argues that in order to expose and oppose this hegemony there is a need to reclaim the human in schools.

In seeking to reclaim the centrality of human being and becoming in any future education policy it also proposes a person-centred alternative that transforms and transcends the hegemony of insistent instrumentalism in favour of an inclusive, creative community as a fitting aspiration for education in a democratic society. (Fielding, 2007 p. 383)

In his work on schools as communities, Fielding argues that schools should be primarily institutions for education. Their functional role, which would include socialisation and building economic capital, should be for the sake of the personal role, education. So if the primary purpose of education is to help us to become persons, schools should aspire to be communities and not just organisations (Fielding, 1999). Communities for Fielding and Macmurray are based on two fundamental ideas: freedom and equality (Macmurray, 1950). They define freedom as the opportunity to become ourselves, something we can only do in relations with others and equality as the recognition of difference and variety amongst individuals (Macmurray, 1938 p. 74).

These ideas resonate with those of Dewey introduced in Chapter 2. Dewey's vision is of schools as embryonic communities where the members learned how to live well. Dewey's writings on schools, freedom and democracy can be

useful in exploring further the development of 'inclusion' into an idea underpinned by democracy.

The inherent tensions between the concepts of schools and democracy have been acknowledged throughout this study. In Chapter 2 it was argued that schools are layered places, maintained by the management systems and structures, with teachers in charge of big groups of students. Schools like Riversville are inherently un-democratic. These kinds of schools are hierarchical organisations; with leaders, managers, teachers and students separated from each other by their function in the system. However, there are ways of making relations within these kinds of organisations more democratic. In Dewey's vision of democratic schools, unlike the view of schooling promoted by thinkers such as A.S Neill (1962), teachers are not an imbalance in the democracy but fundamental to it. Here the adult as educator embraces a 'responsibility for a realm of life which is entrusted to us for our influence but not our interference' (Buber, 1947 p. 114). Individual teachers are fundamental to and have a responsibility for education; Mike's science teacher, Mrs Wild, is clearly having a positive influence on Mike's education.

Fielding argues that if we focus on the core responsibility of teachers and schools as being *education*, the *personal* rather than the functional, then there are opportunities for freedom and equality at the level of human interaction. With a focus on education as personal, connections can be seen to be between the individual members, such as those connections between Ivor and Barbara

Lind. Despite the constraining systems of the functional, within school, there are opportunities for freedom and equality through interpersonal connections and human interaction. In the data, the young people report incidences, moments where they connect. Mike connects with his science teacher because 'she like gets to know people quite well' and Lenny connects with his PE teacher through talking about rugby. These moments of inclusion (Benjamin, 2002) show how members of the school community can 'live well' with each other (Dewey, 1899).

There are individuals, aware of the importance of human relations, who are trying to make positive connections within an unsupportive system. For example the form tutor Jane Redway, was really trying to connect with members of her tutor group to create 'bridges of understanding'. Jane was new to teaching and seemed highly motivated in her endeavours to communicate and connect with her students, their families and their lives in school. The importance of this 'pastoral role', which she acknowledges she has little time for, is something schools should prioritise. Large secondary schools like Riversville, have significant numbers of adults on the site. In addition to the teachers there are many support staff. These support staff would make very useful additions to the pastoral tutor teams. Increasing the number of tutors in this way would allow for a significant reduction in tutor group size, resulting in a more human scale pastoral unit with more time and opportunity for the relationship building Jane recognised as so important.

Connections were seen as crucial by Barbara Lind in the new role in Student Support Services, who saw the value of ‘connecting’ students to people, information and services they needed, sometimes ‘just a simple message’ made all the difference to a student. The students saw Barbara as an important point of connection and a source of further connections. Human interaction at this microlevel, between individuals, can be achieved at any time and the capability of individuals should never be underestimated (Sen, 1979). All members of school communities should be reminded of this regularly; it could become a school motto or mantra. This simple refrain would remind everyone of the possibilities inherent in each human encounter that happens in a school and the potential for all individuals to affect positive change.

Inclusion as an aspiration for democratic education

Fielding would call these schools, where these moments of connection are encouraged, ‘learning communities’. These are schools which are ‘personal and inclusive in orientation, they transform and transcend the functional in a wider, more generous expansion of the human being and encounter’ (Fielding, 1999 p. 83). Here spaces in schools are designed specifically for ‘the social’, recognising the need for human engagement, ‘their organisational architecture is informed by manifest interpersonal intentions’ (Fielding, 2007 p. 403). This would suggest schools on a small scale, or schools-within-schools, where sections of a school are managed separately. Mention is made in the data by the students, parents, the governor and support staff about the size of Riversville College, it is a huge school. Smaller units within the main school would be one

way in which a focus on human relations would inform change of the organisational architecture. This idea of schools–within–schools has been explored in discussion of comprehensive school organisation in the 1970s and 1980s (eg in Moon, 1983) and in the United States by Darling–Hammond (1997). These ideas are given a contemporary context in the report of the Human Scale Schools Project, ‘Schools within schools’ (Wallace, 2009).

Fielding (2007) argues for spaces where young people can get to connect with each other and their teachers through shared engagement. These might be intellectual spaces where, for example, an individual teacher and their class of students work together on a series of lesson plans or students and teachers might meet to discuss the shared development of curriculum or policy across the school. At an individual level, this intellectual space for engagement may be used by students to discuss issues such as their learning plans or exam grade hopes and expectations with their teachers. On a larger scale, students might attend curriculum planning meetings with groups of staff. In Fielding’s collection of democratic activity in contemporary settings (2008) there are examples where students and teachers are engaged together in intellectual spaces but in different roles. These include, for example, students involved in staff development activity and students leading their own academic review meetings.

Fielding also envisages these spaces for encounter as physical spaces, ‘publicly shared, common spaces which are brave, exploratory and vibrant in their

willingness to challenge, to listen, to laugh, to risk adventure and to do so in ways which affirm a shared humanity' (Fielding, 2007 p. 403). This suggests schools should be public places, open and welcoming. Careful consideration is required to the way in which physical space in and around school is designed and developed, to ensure they are good places for individual and group human encounter. For example one of the dining halls at Riversville has a high metal roof and no ceiling which makes it a noisy, unpleasant social space. The development of spaces where the acoustics allow for good listening would improve lunchtimes at Riversville. Involving students in the redesign of school buildings such as this would offer further spaces for shared engagement.

Critics argue that in schools where there is an emphasis on democracy and interpersonal dynamics, students are not sufficiently challenged (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004) to give up 'the comfort of the status quo or suffocated by an overwhelming condescension' (Fielding, 2006 p. 308) rather than liberated by the democracy such schools offer (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The rhetoric of care has fed rather than challenged those perceptions (Fielding, 2000 p. 403). Hannah Arendt, in her essay 'Crisis in Education' (1961), argues that the school is not the world and neither should it pretend to be. Schools should nurture their students, by making the most appropriate decisions on the children's behalf so that young people do not enter the democratic polis, where individuals reveal who they are, too early. Children and young people should not have to be exposed to democracy and the weight of decision making before they have the necessary skills and experience.

Furedi (2004) warns of the risks of formalising relationships in schools. He argues that bureaucratic intervention in education has led to the transformation of relationships involving students and teachers into carefully regulated transactions. Teachers are distracted from developing relationships with students as they are answerable to others beyond their classrooms, so teaching becomes a 'defensive' activity, which has had 'the effect of distancing people from one another' (p. 9). This perspective resonates with that of the support staff, which tended to focus on relationships and was different from those of the teachers, whose talk was primarily of the functional elements of schooling, such as assessment, recording and reporting.

Macmurray, Fielding argues (2007), provides a philosophical corrective to these views, by insisting that the personal in schooling (the education), is achieved through the functional (the systems and structures and the educational opportunities and challenges provided by the teacher). The functional part of schooling has a responsibility for the personal. As an illustration, Mike's science lessons are a good site for his education (the personal) because the teacher provides engaging activities in lessons (the functional). Relations at this micro-level, between individuals are recorded in the data collected in this research. For example, Jane Redway was trying very hard to find time to build relationships in her tutor sessions but was restricted by time and other priorities. Jill Carter cared for youngsters at lunchtime and saw it as something she does as a personal response to students' needs but it is not in her job description. Raffo and Gunter (2008) acknowledge there are problems with 'scaling up'

initiatives, such as the development of democratic relations in a whole school, democratic relationships between individuals and small groups are easier to achieve than practice of democracy at whole school level. There are significant risks involved for school leaders who experiment with leading schools in a democratic way, and courage is needed. It might be argued that the development of democratic school systems is an impossible task unless there is powerful political support. In a climate where there is insufficient support, working for more democratic relationships in schools is perhaps seen as activism, subversion or individual transgression of the system. Once groups of teachers or whole schools are involved in the 'aspiration' for democratic education and the school has the capacity to respond, courage to take risks can be sought.

In arguments about whole school management for inclusion, there is an acknowledgement that the 'capacity' of a school to respond is key (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007). Harris et al., (2003) determine a school's capacity to be 'the potential to give form to strategic possibilities' (p. 93). Davis and Florian (2004) argue that when the difficulties young people face in a school exceed the capacity of the school to respond, those students are 'pathologised', labelled. This 'pathologising' of students leads to the legitimating of difficulties such as behaviour, low academic achievement, individual social concerns, the young people are dehumanised , labelled, and put to one side.

The Assistant Principal (6-2-2007) said that ‘young people are being included in a community college despite disability/behaviour etc that should exclude them’, and that as a result of national inclusion policy ‘there are no special schools left, no experts left – the specialised services are no longer around’.

Barbara Lind, from Student Services reports that the school had a reputation for requiring ‘students (to) come here to learn and that they maybe ought to leave their troubles at the gate’ (1-5-2007). The Morton students argued that at Riversville College ‘only able children are important’ (Jo, 18-1-2007) and school leaders talk of ‘pathology’ and ‘normalising’. Schools can legitimise their focus on those students who are successful, through this pathologising of students (Gillbourn and Youdell, 2000).

Harris (2001) argues that if a school can increase its capacity, it will be less exclusive. Referring to school staff, Harris argues that ‘capacity building is concerned with creating conditions, opportunities and experiences for collaboration and mutual learning...building school capacity implies that schools promote collaboration, empowerment and inclusion (p. 261). Through the development of collaboration and mutual learning among staff, schools become ‘communities of practice’ which Sergiovanni (2000) argues may be the single most important way to improve a school (p.139). If this notion is now extended to include everyone, including the support staff and students, we can begin to conceptualise Fielding’s ‘person-centred school community’, developing the capacity of its human inhabitants in a collective way for a collective good.

An example of where this collaboration and mutual learning might happen at Riversville College is in the development of a shared aspiration for academic achievement for all students (not just able ones). From the findings of this research, there is clearly an overlap in the aspirations of the Morton students and teachers. The school's Vision Statement identifies academic achievement as a priority and the teachers and students both express the desire for school as a place for learning. What seems to be missing is communication about this shared aspiration. Development of a shared understanding and purpose of schooling between teachers and students would seem a good place to begin (Ruddock and Fielding, 2006). It would offer opportunities for a democratic engagement with students, providing opportunities for student agency (Gunter and Thompson, 2007). This is a way to see educational inclusion, as a political practice where students take part in making decisions about choices (p.181).

Michael Fielding's work 'in the field' on democracy in schooling provides examples of where democratic engagement with students can happen in schools. In his work with the City of Portsmouth's Community Learning, 2000-2005, he has shown how democratic systems can be mapped across an entire city's education network. Another example is his work 'Beyond Student Voice to Democratic Community' (Fielding, 2008), which collected together the work of educationalists who are exploring practical possibilities for democratic activity in schools.

Projects are grouped under three headings:

- **Radical inclusion-involving those whose voices are seldom heard**

For example:

Developing student autonomy at a school for students with Profound and Severe Learning difficulties at Harding Hill School

Looking at practices that enable teenager parents to contribute to participatory democracy

- **Reversing roles-students as agents of professional adult learning**

For example:

Student led INSET at Hayward's Heath Sixth form College

Year 5 and 6 student led Learning Review meetings at Wroxham School

- **Co-constructing the common good: remaking public spaces in school where adults and young people can have an open dialogue**

For example:

The Research Forum at Bishops Park College, Clacton: Here a forum of parents, students, teachers and governors have informed and researched the 'schools-within-schools approach to education on a human scale'.

These are all practical projects on a conceivable scale that offer hope for more democratic schooling in the future. They offer 'the oxygen of fresh hope to find the energy to try to make [school] a better and fairer place' (Brighouse, 2009).

Within the current political climate, education is seen as ‘the crucible within which social advancement is formed and where an opportunity society is promoted’ (Roulstone and Prideaux, 2008 p. 20). However, evidence that the link between social exclusion, low educational achievement and limited life chances has been disrupted, is hard to come by. The work of the Sutton trust (Blanden et al., 2005) and Allan Milburn’s latest review of opportunity and social mobility (The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009) confirm the links between social status and school success continue to hold firm. There are exclusionary forces at work in contemporary economic and educational systems and education is ‘barely able to compensate’ for society (Raffo and Gunter, 2008 p. 402). The principal talks of schools not being ‘equipped’ to cope with the demand of including all students. Raffo and Gunter argue that the inherent limits of education should be acknowledged which then necessitates the conception of education as part of society. Education must be factored into economic and social policy in order to bring about inclusion. The aligning of education with wider social policy calls for ‘active engagement’ between schools and their communities (Raffo and Gunter, 2008). In their review of the government’s ‘localism agenda’ – focused on revitalising local democracy, Aspden and Birch (2005) call for the notion of democratic renewal to be at the heart of all public service delivery, including schools. If democratic renewal is at the heart of schooling schools will become public places, a place for public engagement within school and between the school and the wider community.

A place for student voice

Central to Fielding's vision of person-centred schooling is a commitment to 'student voice'. This goes beyond the rhetoric and of the familiar engagements with social and inter-personal matters such as 'buddying', mentoring, and school councils, to students being involved in school policy and practice. The experience of really listening to students in the context of this research has been transformative, bringing into consciousness a layer of schooling which teachers are only vaguely aware of. The Morton students have provided an insight into a world of school experience that requires engagement with by school staff and researchers interested in inclusion and exclusion.

There has been a rapid popularisation of 'student voice'. Government policy in schools and public policy more generally, promotes the idea of participation. For example the Neighbourhood Renewal programme Morton is undergoing, promotes the participation of community 'stakeholders' so their voice is heard in the planning of community development projects (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2005). The Chairperson on the LSP reports that the folk of Morton had been 'consulted to death' (16-5-2007).

Ruddock and Fielding (2006) track the development of the idea of student voice in schools. They have both been long time promoters of the value of student voice but are suspicious of recent growth in government support and see 'perils in the popularity'. They express concern about 'surface compliance' (p. 223) where student participation and opportunities for students to inform school

policy and practice are limited. It can be used as a 'toxic makeover' (Gunter and Thompson, 2006), where 'despite a rhetoric of agency the reality is that students remain objects of elite adult plans' (Gunter and Thompson, 2007 p. 181). Cooke and Kothari (2001) warn that participation may in fact be a new 'tyranny', a new form of domination, an 'unjustified' exercise of power (p.4). Their warnings are a useful reminder that participatory activities must be thoughtfully prepared and practiced.

One aspect of consultation and participation that is very important is that it represents an enactment, in the present, of democratic principles (Ruddock and Flutter, 2004). Teachers and policy makers are preoccupied with young people's 'becoming' what they will be, rather than focusing on the here and now, the state of 'being' (Oakley, 1994). The young people in this research were thinking about their future but it was the intensity of the present that dominated their talk. Promoting 'student voice' as a way of redefining the status of young people in schools is a commitment to the present, to their experiencing democracy of rather than just learning the theory about it for future use: education as democracy, rather than education for democracy. Ranson (2000) links the ideas of schools as democratic communities with the confidence and skills of negotiation and co-operation that young people develop in these settings and the agency they can then have in the development of their schooling. They learn democracy by living it. It is clear from the data collected in this research that the 'empowerment' work the Morton students had done at the Youth Club had had the students to develop these kinds of 'agency'

skills. They had made significant contributions to community issues in Morton and their ability to articulate their frustrations with school was significant.

Encouraging the use of student voice as the development of student agency in schools is something that can be done at a very local level by individuals and small groups, giving individual teachers or school leaders the opportunity to experiment. It would be very interesting, for example, to enable the Morton students to inform improvements with regards to the school bus services.

Fielding's project, detailed above, draws together wide ranging examples which illustrate the range and scope of contemporary practice in the development of person centred schooling. Although there are a growing number of experiments going on in mainstream schools, there is a sense that these projects are still 'islands of risky commitment' (Ruddock and Fielding, 2006 p. 229).

Writers argue that there are now many teachers prepared to take the 'risk' and commit to student voice in schools as they are disillusioned with education policy and practice lead by a standards agenda (Frowe, 2001). However, it is still acknowledged as 'risky practice', with opportunities for full engagement limited by such constraints as the very narrow view of student assessment framed in education policy and measurement of school success with GCSE grades and league tables.

There are also some inherent risks with the consultation of students. School systems advantage students who have the recognised forms of cultural and

linguistic capital (Bernstein, 1977, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), those that can articulate their thoughts and speak confidently. There is therefore a very real danger that ‘uncritical adoption of student voice initiatives may reinforce existing hierarchies’ (Noyes, 2005 p. 537). As Fielding argues, in order to stay true to person-centred schooling with its concomitant commitment to student voice, the voices that express anger and disapproval or those that cannot or chose not to be heard are acknowledged and ‘listened to’. It would have been an important addition to this research to have the voice of Robert included. He was not identified by the Morton students as someone to be approached to ask to contribute to the project. Person-centred learning communities must resolve to include the voices of everyone they serve, including those who cannot or who choose not to speak. There is a need to ensure that everyone is heard and this is perhaps an unachievable goal.

Writers such as Fielding and Gunter would argue that the benefits of engagement with the promotion of student agency in schools to individuals, groups, whole schools and beyond, is worth the risk. Risk is required for the ‘breaking out of the grounds of certainty’ (Stronach and Maclure, 1997). The certainty is that schools remain divided, inherently exclusionary places unless ‘risks are taken that might rupture the security of the power relations that maintain the status quo’ (Ruddock and Fielding, 2006 p. 255).

Part 2. Informing openings for future research

Gunter and Thompson's (2006, 2007) work on voice and democracy is also implicitly linked with the practice of schooling and inclusion. They see inclusion as a 'political practice' where students take part in making decisions (2006, p. 181). Students become subjects in a school, active agents rather than just 'minor footnotes in an unaltered adult text' (Fielding and Prieto, 2002 p. 20). Gunter and Thompson argue for a form of student voice that is learning through activism. They promote the idea of students as researchers – actively engaging in research in schools. This is a development that offers exciting opportunities. For example, a close examination of students' perceptions of bullying in the school would be an interesting starting point. At a more fundamental level, an investigation by students (or teachers) of the underlying issues behind poor attendance at the school would be of great value to the school.

The development of groups of young people as researchers in school is also something that can be done on a small scale initially. This work can be considered in Giroux's (2005) sense of boundary practice, challenging those bounds that limit thought and practice. Asking the questions like those of Foucault's ethical work, that have 'a lack of respect for familiar hierarchies' (Foucault, 1988), in order to promote new ways of seeing.

Fielding (2006) envisages the disturbance of the divided spaces in schools which segregate students and staff. The Riversville school governor, Mike

Layton questions why staff and students cannot eat together in the school refectory or use same toilets. Shared use of physical spaces like these would 'disturb' the status quo and would be worth investigating. The role of support staff in the disturbance of pedagogical boundaries and spaces would also be another interesting place to begin enquiry. It is clear from the data collected in this study that the perspective of the support staff from their position in-between is an interesting place from which to view developments in person-centred school activity. Fielding (2006) also envisages 'the emergence of significant occasions when young people lead dialogue with peers and with staff, encouraging groups in school (or the whole school) to engage as equals, as co-enquirers and co-contributors to understand how, as a community, it helps its members to live good lives together' (p. 312). The introduction of student (and teacher) research groups in a school would offer a starting point. For example, student and teacher research on the shared use of facilities in Riversville College would offer a significant opportunity to look at practical way members of the school could live well together.

Reflections on research approach and methodology

Allan (2008) among others (e.g. Barton, 2003; Slee, 2003) argues that inclusion should be undertaken as a political project, 'a disturbing and challenging activity essential of the struggle for change' (Barton, 2003 p. 13). Slee (2001) argues that if inclusion is seen in terms of 'cultural politics' rather than as a technical problem, it can then be seen to be about rights of citizenship for all rather the solution for a few. Barton (2005) argues that 'hope is central to the struggle for inclusion' and 'involves an informed recognition of the offensive nature of current conditions and relations and the belief that the possibilities for change are not foreclosed' (p. 23). Certainly, there is 'no advantage is derived through a calculus of emiseration' (Slee, 2001 p.174) but a sustained examination of what was clearly a miserable situation for the students who contributed to this study, needed the maintenance of hope. The oxygen of fresh hope helps find the energy (Brighouse, 2009) to continue with the struggle.

Finding a starting point for this huge endeavour is important if we are to avoid the confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion, the 'territories of failure' of inclusion. As a place to begin, Slee (2001) invites us to 'explore our own knowledge...and to examine the implications of the kinds of beliefs we hold' (p. 169). Allan (2008) suggests a way to do this exploration is to use the framework of the 'ethical project' offered by Foucault, in which 'oneself and one's capacity to act is considered part of the material on which work has to be done' (Allan, 2008 p.158). If everyone were to engage in ethical work on themselves, with the resulting increased awareness of how our beliefs, actions

and language have the potential to oppress others, 'oppression would be reduced' (Allan, 2008 p.116). Seeing work on inclusion this way, as an examination of oneself, gives agency to individual researchers and offers the opportunity to see possibilities for change at the individual level. It also offers the possibility of this personal (and then shared) consciousness raising activity spreading across groups of individuals and organisations.

Disseminating the reporting of consciousness raising research activity raises certain ethical dilemmas. In Chapter 3 the details of the ethical framework for this project are detailed. Here it is stated that the BERA guidelines were followed at all stages. These guidelines demand respect for persons, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research and academic freedom. As Christians (2005) argues, herein lies conflict and tension. An ethical project promotes the individual researcher as agent and also demands attention to the effects of the actions of individuals on others. In a search for justice for some, injustices should not be meted out to others. The researcher was acutely aware of the risks of presenting some elements of the data collected from individuals, aware that respect for all persons must be maintained at all times. It is argued here that it is the relationship and interaction between what is said by individuals, the contingency, that is important. For example, the setting of the students' words against the context detailed by the senior managers at the school, illustrates the separation between their two perspectives. Exactly who these individuals are is of less importance.

Great care has been taken throughout the study to use pseudonyms for geographical and professional labels, so that the study could be located in a secondary school in a rural area of the UK. Precisely where is not important. There were significant benefits to the researcher of being a student of The Open University which allows for any geographical location in the UK. As argued in Chapter 3, case studies require integrity of the researcher and require them to 'be present', to be open and honest with and about their work. This approach has been used throughout the writing of the report. It was also used during the main data collection period.

Reporting the findings locally brings with it great challenge. This has been helped by a number of significant events, some managed consciously by the researcher and others more serendipitously. The main data collection period required extensive amounts of time being spent in Morton and the school. Once the majority of the data was collected, the researcher consciously withdrew from the school and community. This withdrawal was assisted by changes in teaching commitments which meant time needed to be spent elsewhere. The following period away from the locality, allowed time for reflection and analysis of the data by the researcher and time for those involved in the research to move on. This period covered more than one academic year which has meant a great deal of change happened particularly at the school. These changes include the departure from school of the four senior staff interviewed and two cohorts of students (in July 2007 and July 2008). A further cohort, including the youngest students interviewed in this study, will depart in July 2010, before the

report of the case study is disseminated. There have been some changes in Morton too. The Neighbourhood Renewal programme with its Local Strategic Partnership has come to an end and sadly both youth workers have left as their funding ceased too. With all these local changes in personnel, the data can be seen to document the past and the findings to inform the future. This present space, between the past and the future could be envisioned as offering 'spaces in between' (Stronach, 1996) for mutual engagement in change. Here in these spaces, all members of the school community can work together in the envisioning of a more human centred school (Fielding, 2007).

This research work began with an aim for it to be 'participatory', for the students to be involved in every element: a way to foreground the perspectives of the 'marginalised youth' and to identify and challenge the exclusion they were facing (Alderson, 2000, Cahill, 2004). Participatory methods on the whole are more ethically acceptable and offer epistemological advantages (Pain, 2004).

Yet some writers argue participatory techniques can reinforce rather than challenge hierarchical power relations (e.g. Cooke and Kothari, 2001). It could be argued in this study, for example, that the attempt to include young people in the study has further alienated them and reinforced their position as 'different'. There was a distinct 'participation' discourse amongst the people involved in administering the Neighbourhood Renewal process. Here 'stakeholders' were 'consulted to death' (Chair of the LSP, 16-5-2006) which seemed to have alienated many local residents, who were now refusing to be involved in the

‘social engineering project’ (John Seccombe, 7–12–2007). There is also the complication of power relations among groups of young people involved in ‘research’ which might constitute new forms of domination (Schafer and Yarwood, 2008). There is clear evidence in the data that there are complex power relations among students in schools and this may well prove problematic when involving some students as researchers in a school.

It soon became apparent that to be really ‘participatory’ was unrealistic with all the constraints, including time and accessibility to the school, community and students. It was clear that this could not be a truly ‘participatory’ project, as the researcher would be controlling the data collection system, analysis and presentation. The decision was made to hold the interviews in school for practical reasons including access and personal safety. This was acceptable with the students but a straightforward alternative could not be offered, which compromised the sense of being ‘participatory’ and influenced the outcomes of the interviews. Self-selection by students favoured those who were confident and could express themselves. The absence of those students who were unwilling or unable to contribute has led to notable silences in the data. The recognition that participation could only be limited and was always controlled, confirmed the appropriateness of the ‘ethical project’ approach to this study.

This research began fuelled by a deep sense of injustice but by using the ‘ethical project’ framework, no attempts to be emancipatory were made. The students from Morton, first met at the Youth Club, who then volunteered to

talk, proved to be on their own journey of self discovery and empowerment. They had been working through an 'empowerment curriculum' with a youth worker over the previous months: not a project in 'emancipation' but an example of Foucault's ethical project of the 'the self as agent'. The young people and youth worker were engaged in ethical work on themselves (Foucault, 1984) exploring the opportunities for becoming active subjects, with opportunities to transgress. This could be considered to be 'boundary practice' (Giroux, 2005), with both individuals and groups challenging preconceptions and boundaries.

The young people's increased awareness of themselves, their community, their rights and responsibilities as citizens, which they had developed through their work at the Youth Club, was evident in their talk. All the students were surprised at the interest in what they had to say and seemed to welcome the opportunity to talk about their experiences in school. Their talk was 'full of oscillations, uncertainties and ambivalences' (Allan, 2008 p.1) which disturb clear conclusions. They revealed their deep sense of injustice as to what was happening to them in school and their community, but also their own exclusionary, labelled views of others in school and Morton.

Janine, whose story introduced this research, was transformed by the Morton Youth Club. At school she was on the list of regular non-attendees and ECR (internal exclusion room) attendees and general no-hoper (Pat Drew, 15-1-2007) whilst in Morton she was nominated for an award for her services to the

community. Through the Youth Club in Morton she seemed to be able to 'defy the threat of coercive markers' (Allan, 2008 p.111) including those of her challenging family and economic circumstances, and become identified as a responsible citizen. In school, the markers held more firmly around her identity, she was labelled and disengaged.

There was no evidence of the kind of engagement happening at the Youth Club with students at the school. The role of youth clubs and youth workers in developing young people's skills and experience of democracy is acknowledged in public policy (e.g. in Youth Matters (DfES, 2005b)) but very poorly funded. A recent report, 'Somewhere to Belong: a blue print for 21st century youth clubs' (2009), highlights the importance of these sites of informal education but their significant under-funding, with 'half the country's youth clubs surviving hand to mouth' (Gentleman, 2009). One of the Morton youth workers was made redundant during the research period and the other moved to another job which offered better pay and conditions. This research shows there is much useful information to be gathered on the development of agency in young people through informal education practice in places like youth clubs and how this might inform the education practice in schools.

It was the young people and support staff that provided new insights into the dividing practices in the school which confirmed the importance of listening to voices outside one's own experience. Researchers also need to look beyond their own disciplines, to hear voices beyond education. Reading contemporary

thinkers in other disciplines, such as Sen (1999, 2009) and Yunus, made a significant impact on my wider thinking during this research. The importance for researchers to find a voice outside the academic world seems also to be an imperative. This research shows the local press in Riversville had a very significant impact on people's perceptions of Morton and the College. Public engagement in public places by researchers at a local (as well as national) level may be one way of 'opening debates' on important public issues such as the future of schooling

The young people in Morton, through their activity at the Youth Club showed a growing awareness of 'self as agent', which resonated with my own experiences during the research. This work draws to a close, hopeful that it has demonstrated that this kind of ethical project is possible for any individual, and that if we all embarked on this kind of work on ourselves, oppression in all its forms, would be reduced (Allan, 2008).

On reflection

This research project was about schools and inclusion. The geographical context focused attention on the role Riversville College played in the lives of the young people from Morton. Through 'turning up the volume' on quiet voices (Clough, 2002 p. 67), insights were gathered at the margins of the school and its locality, providing critical feedback (Glenny and Roaf, 2008). The research illuminates the importance of the social role that school plays and the potential of the social to include and exclude. Recognising the significance of

the relationships between the members of the school community has led to consideration of the development of democratic relations in schools. Here inclusion is seen as an aspiration (Slee, 2001) for democratic education and a political practice (Gunter and Thompson, 2006), with students engaged as 'active agents' through research and enquiry in their schools. Unless risks like this are taken, with their potential to rupture the power relations of the status quo, schools will remain inherently exclusionary places.

The young people in Morton who do not go to school, will remain disconnected from the social and other opportunities and resources school offers. Those who do attend school, like Ali, will continue to go because of 'friends, some lessons...and it's down in town' (7-7-2007).

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Appendix 1. Main data sources

Part 1. Documents

Community documents

Local history books

Collection of old local newspaper cuttings

Parish Council meeting minutes

Parish newsletters

County Council reports

District Council reports

Minutes from Morton Local Strategic Partnership meetings

School documents

OFSTED report 2005 and 2009

Vision Statement

Attendance Policy

Social Inclusion Policy

School Prospectus

Weekly staff Bulletins

Attendance returns 2005 and 2006

Part 2. Interviews

	Interview				
	date				
<i>Students</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Marty year 12	18/01/2007				
Ivor year 11	18/01/2007	25/01/2007			
Jo year 11	18/01/2002	25/01/2007	Audio diary May 2007		
Ali year 10	07/07/2007				
Lenny year 8	16/05/2007	13/06/2007	17/07/2007	16/06/2008	23/06/2008
Mike year 8		13/06/2007	17/07/2007		
<i>School Staff</i>					
Principal	07/06/2007				
Assistant Principal	08/02/2007	Tina Roberts			
Student Support Services	01/05/2007	Barbara Lind			
Tutor and class teacher	11/05/2007	Jane Redway			
Senior TA	08/05/2007	Fran Matthews			
TA/lunchtime supervisor	02/07/2007	Jill Carter			
Learning Mentor	18/07/2007	Steve North			
SENCO	09/05/2007	Sheila Tynner			
<i>Outside school</i>					
Senior Youth Worker	15/01/2007	Pat Drew			
Parish Councillor	29/06/2007				
Morton parent	15/05/2007	Alice Martin			

Primary Head teacher	15/05/2007	
EWO	01/05/2007	
Student out of school	27/03/2009	Danny
Governor	13/02/2008	Mike Layton
Morton parent	07/12/2007	John Seccombe
Morton Parish Councillor	29/06/2007	

Appendix 2. Mosaic profile for Morton

A statistical profile has been produced on the two Census Output Areas which best represent Morton. The administrative parish and ward boundaries include DF and the village of L, analysis of Morton as an area has proved difficult. The amount of data that is available to this small geography is very limited and predominantly drawn from the 2001 Census. With this in mind the use of Mosaic seemed a method of providing further information to a postcode level.

The following Mosaic types have been identified from analysing the postcodes within the two Census Output Areas on which the statistical profile analysis has been completed. I

Type 21 – Respectable Rows

Type 22 – Affluent Blue Collar

Type 23 – Industrial Grit

Type 46 – White Van Culture

Type 47 – New Town Materialism

Type 55 – Small Town Seniors

The percentage of residential delivery points in each of the above Mosaic types are shown in table below.

Mosaic Type	Number of RDPs	% of RDPs
Respectable Rows	30	9.9
Affluent Blue Collar	36	11.9
Industrial Grit	9	3
White Van Culture	52	17.2
New Town Materialism	102	33.7
Small Town Seniors	74	24.4

* RDPs – Residential Delivery Points

The above analysis illustrates the prominent Mosaic type within Morton is New Town Materialism and around 24% of the residential delivery points classified as Small Town Seniors.

Type 47 – New Town Materialism

Key features: Large families Co-habiting and single parents
Some overcrowding Poor qualifications
Good employment prospects Outgoings exceed income
Self-catering holidays

Type 55 – Small Town Seniors

Key features:	Pensioners	Low/middle incomes
	Savings	Seaside resorts
	Pleasant homes	Enjoy gardens
	Mainstream tastes	Local outlook
	Bird watching	

Corporate Information services April 2006

See www.experian.co.uk for an explanation of the Mosaic classification system

Appendix 3. Riversville College 'Inclusion Policy'

Social Inclusion: Pupil Support

In our aim to raise educational standards for all our students, we recognise the vital importance of regular attendance and high standards of student behaviour. By developing good practices in these two areas, we aim to keep our exclusion figures to a minimum.

Social Inclusion Criteria

Students who are deemed to be at risk might fulfil all or some of the following:

- Sustained pattern of exclusion from lessons
- Periods of short-term suspension
- Unexpected emotional or behavioural dysfunction
- Volatile conduct and poor management of emotions
- Inability to access the curriculum because of consistent non-attendance

Attendance (see Attendance Policy)

Other approaches include:

- Using IT to improve monitoring of attendance
- Raising the profile of attendance among parents through our home-school agreement, parents' evenings and newsletters
- Having a First Day Contact System in operation with an identified group of poor attendees

Strategies for Inclusion

The key features of our approach are:

- Ensuring that students deemed 'at risk of exclusion' receive appropriate support through our support systems.
- Developing a multi-agency approach and strengthening partnerships with parents.
- Constructing flexible and appropriate programmes/curriculum to engage students 'at risk', including attending The Link as an alternative to the main site.
- Working closely with our feeder primaries in order to identify Year 6 pupils who may require supportive work in the early stages of secondary education.
- Providing appropriate preventative work in KS3 through developing such strategies as Social Skills Groups and Mentoring schemes.
- Organising work related learning where appropriate in KS4.

The Use of Exclusion

The college will exclude a student for a fixed period or permanently:

- In response to serious breaches of the college's behaviour policy.
- Once a range of alternative strategies have been tried and have failed.
- If allowing the student to remain in college could seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the college

Appendix 4. Youth Issues Group meeting minutes 1–3–2007

Present:

Strategic Partnership chairperson JC, Community Intervention worker GL, youth worker PD, Pastor DS, Police Constable DP, Police Community Safety Officer MC, four young people including JM, DH, MG,

1 Skate park

- 1.1 GL explained that the skate ramps were not worth repair according to Rhino Ramps company, and would be far too expensive.
- 1.2 DS stated that he knew of a friendly farmer who was willing to store ramps and would be available in the future, if he was given due notice.

2 Youth venue

- 2.1 JC and GL reported that planning approval had been received for the Pavilion and although there had been objections from a local resident and talk of appealing, the approval was final.
- 2.2 A draft funding report was shown by GL and further funding opportunities mentioned.
- 2.3 PD spoke about the Youth Capital Fund Challenge, for groups who had already entered the Youth Capital Fund, where the Morton young people have the chance of securing another £35k, which would be used to fit out and sound-proof the music studio in the new hall. DP stated that this would be a great input for the young people to have to the

funding. PD also stated that young people were being trained up under the open college network, to be senior members.

2.4 DS stated that Dawson's and Wrigley's have practically supported projects in the past and would be a good source to find practical element to help with the build.

2.5 JC also stated that the Youth Opportunities fund could be taken advantage of.

2.6 JC also stated that there was a necessity to create an asset register as insurance was being drawn up for the Youth Venue.

2.7 DP then questioned the issue of security in the pavilion, as he stated that all must protect their assets. A suitable alarm system, CCTV, Strong window glass were discussed by all, to act as a deterrent as much as a protection. Also DH suggested 'smart water' a UV marking system for computers. JC then suggested locking the computer terminals away permanently, that only the administrators could access.

2.8 The Fare Car system was suggested for a young person who wanted to partake in football training outside of Morton. It was agreed that it should be put to the Morton Partnership for funding.

3 Football Pitch

3.1 The young people expressed a need for a good quality football pitch.

3.2 JC reported that she had received a quote for drainage for the pitch, and there was also a need to get it repaired from molehills and dog waste. It was expressed that if the grass was cut, and the lines marked up, it

would send a message to the dog walkers not to abuse the pitch if it were to be in use.

3.3 It was mentioned that HB is the FA area co-ordinator.

3.4 MC recognised the necessity to tackle the dog waste issue, but was too expensive with bins and wardens. However there is a new sinkable dog loo where the waste rots away directly into the ground, which was reported to be a more affordable approach, as they would not require wardens.

3.5 GL suggested getting in southwest television to report on the issue.

3.6 MG also asked about availability of a basketball hoop, as the general public had been banned from using the school's. WS suggested that she could negotiate with the school about this subject, as trouble with vandalism surrounding the school had decreased dramatically.

4 Bullying on the School Bus

4.1 This matter was raised and put to the young people present, who reported that it was an issue with younger members on the bus who were doing the bullying. JM explained that when she tried to intervene before, she was excluded from the bus for a period.

4.2 GL suggested a mentoring scheme, DH recognised that the school was not taking the issue seriously, and for a mentoring scheme the young people would need the backing from the school. However, JM stated that there were currently not many older young people on the bus who could do this mentoring scheme.

- 4.3 JC stated that she was having a meeting with the Morton Partners on 12th March and would bring this issue up with the Headmaster then.
- 4.4 MG mentioned that cameras installed on busses worked well on some Riversville school busses, or having the radio on, as people were happy to sit and listen to music.
- 4.5 JM explained that often the busses are mouldy, dusty and wet. She explained that a driver from Morton fits his bus with rubbish bins, and has the radio on, which suits everyone and keeps the bus tidy.
- 4.6 All agreed that the problem points to a solution that the school must attend to. DH stated that the school must also be more responsive to transport criminal damaged issues on the busses as well.

5 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting shall be held on 28th March 2007, 3pm

Appendix 5. Riversville College ‘Vision Statement’

On Route to Success

The College’s Vision was developed by students, staff and parents and is called ‘On Route to Success’. The vision has three main strands which we feel are equally important in this modern society: promoting and nurturing the PERSONAL QUALITIES and PERSONAL INTERESTS of each individual as well as ensuring they ACHIEVE success. The College thus aims, through its broad and varied curriculum and many extra-curricular activities, to provide stimulating learning opportunities which motivate independent learners and recognise and reward progress, both in the classroom and whilst taking part in projects, competitions, trips and visits. Our Reward Scheme has been designed specifically for the College by staff and students and sees young people on a day to day basis working towards certificates, gift vouchers, celebration evenings, band nights, trips to adventure parks and the ultimate Graduation.

Promoting and nurturing the PERSONAL QUALITIES, PERSONAL INTERESTS and ACHIEVEMENTS of each individual

Appendix 6. Full interview transcript

Lenny and Mike Interview 13-6-2007

- M so you got to read the papers did you?
C well, go on tell me about that?
M said in the paper that there were like in Morton like youths up to like three o'clock drunk, disorderly, smashing the buildings and stuff
C it was on the front of the (newspaper) times – do you think that was fair?
L not really cos there was only like a couple of us that do it. I mean most of em stay out of trouble and just like play football or someink but some of em are a bit wild but ...
C but it's not fair that everybody written about in the same way?
M yeah there's some kind of a meeting in the next couple of days
C go on tell me about that
M I think it's like the sort of the 16th June they are having a council meeting to talk about the youths and that and they are getting more police up there
C oh right
L before this started happening there was like one copper a week but now it's like 2 or 3 every day
C so you've had lots up there?
L yesterday my brother cracked his head open if the coppers weren't there we wouldn't have been able to get him down to (the hospital) quick enough but because they saw it, they rushed him down there with my Mum. We were playing American football and he cracked his head open on the big black poles
C so who picked him up- which police officer was it?
M it was (city) police – cos there were like taking back this woman so they just happened to be there at the time
C what do you mean – taking back this woman ?
M they had a woman in the car she was from like down (city) Police station and they were just taking her back to her house when they saw (brother)
C so was the woman coming back – was she a Morton woman?
L who was that?
M (gives name – laughs)
C so it was good timing for you then?
L yeah – I was at Youth Club and just coming back- my other (older) brother was just carrying him in and there was blood covering the side of his face and I thought no, he's done something really bad and next I heard a knock on the door and I was going to shout 'get lost' but I thought I might as well answer it and I was just about to shout. I opened the door and there was coppers and I thought – oh – come in – there was 2 of them
C and they'd heard about the accident?

L they said they'd driving past and saw (older brother) carrying (younger brother) with blood dripping

C is that a common kind of occurrence then – the police being around?

M yeah – but our local copper is DP and um M – but he's just a support worker or whatever it is

M we used to have PC B

C when you get into school, is it something that people talk about I school?

L well when it was I the newspaper most people went – oh were you in so and so in Morton was there any fights and stuff – and I said no they make it out to be like mean streets sort of thing but it's not really I mean the papers over exaggerate things

M there was actually fires and stuff

L who set that off ?

M it was at the PO club wasn't it?

L oh yeah -I saw something out the window but didn't think much of it. Things will happen here – like the school windows being broken and car windows being broken things sort of happen in a short space of time that's what happened – normally it will only happen like now and again but not in a short space

C and those have happened quite recently?

M yeah well – there's a Youth Club which is meant to get children off the streets don't you – but it in like half term and summer time they don't normally open which is when you are most likely to have like a mess around

L the Youth Club got attacked last time cos there was stuff put through the window and stuff like that

C really – you mean just recently?

L it was about 2-3 months ago I was in there when it happened it was when j and m fell out

C I heard about that – it was obviously quite a to do wasn't it?

L yeah I was on the PC and saw something go through the window – the one outside got a ton of mates together and they were chucking stuff through the windows they getting on now – getting on with each other

C but you'd like to see more to do in like half term an holidays?

M yeah

L me and him normally go down Riversville together cos up at Morton there's nothing to do at all apart from play football

M they are doing up the Youth Club now

C how's that getting on?

M it s meant to be months – 6 weeks now

L then there's meant to be a 5 aside football pitch isn't it?

M no a skate park – then the pitches – a full size pitch – it will be tarmac'd and everything

M P (youth worker) told me – but she's left

L so who's the other woman then

M A
L A, that's right
C so P was a youth worker – but she's gone?
L yeah and she was good enough as well
M there's' another one called B – was one of the best youth workers
–
L I never came when she was there
C so who's running Youth Club at the moment then?
L it's D and A- B comes into it a bit
C So it's on Monday, Wednesday and Friday?
M no just Wednesday and Friday. Tuesday is like the younger ones
– year , 7 and 8
L I went yesterday – there's' such a difference – in the young ones
there are all chucking balls and messing around being immature – the
older ones they'll talk and be sensible and stuff like that – I don't like
going to the young one
C have you still got a music night?
L yeah Wednesdays – although there's not many going
C why's that then?
L they've all got jobs
M they get fed up with it, it's quite boring
L the year 7 one used to be packed but I went last Friday it was just
me, L and ...there was just 4 of us in the whole youthy
C so why do you think that is then? people don't like what
happening there?
M there's not much going on – we can do stuff on the PC, set up
the pool – that's about it
C do you think the trouble is linked with the fact people are not in
Youth Club?
M yeah
L if like the year 7 acted more mature and went with the bigger
ones that would be Ok cos it's different but the year 7 are a lot less
mature than we were when we were in year 7 and you don't want to be
around them
C how was year 6 for you?
M it was fine – cos I had home dinners and then come back
L I had school dinners- they was good. The little ones in the
playground look the same but you think that in a couple of years they
will have all get jobs
C what was it like when you first came to Riversville those first few
days when you came from primary?
M confusing
L you kept getting lost didn't we – you could fit our primary in this
building couldn't we?
C how many were there in year 6?
L only R(boy), me you, K(girl), R(girl) and um 6
M wasn't there...?
L she didn't go to primary – I was like – who the hell's she?

C only 6 – have you stuck together?

L me and him have – me and R

M R he's drifting off-

L R – we barely see her – on the bus that's the only time we see her – I'm glad me and him are together cos we are best friends

M K – I never see her

L yesterday was the first time her in 3 weeks- oh no, I saw K at Youth Club yesterday but R doesn't catch our bus

C and the buses are Ok now?

L yeah cos now people from Bus8 have gone like on to Bus30 – so Bus8's better

C and that's the one you are both on?

L Bus8 and Bus30 normally don't get along do they?

C I remember you telling me about that. Now that you are settled in to the secondary school – what are the good things about being here compared to primary school?

M better PE lessons?

L more friends

C what about the teachers here?

L they are not so good

M some of them are nice

L Mr Radford's nice though

C give me some nice teachers

M Mrs T

L Mr T aint bad

M Mrs W– a science teacher

C what makes them good?

L they understand – with Mr T – if you do something wrong he's reasonable – if you do something wrong by mistake – he'll say that was a mistake don't do it again but if you do something wrong on purpose then he'll go strict which I find fair

C what would you say is good about someone like Mrs W then Mike?

M well she like gets to know people quite well

C gets to know people quite well- that's interesting

M yeah – and in our class we've got most of the people that cause trouble – but she keeps the class under control and does loads of practical most of the time and lets us go outside to get like practical stuff like leaves – she keeps us all under control- she doesn't – I've never heard her shout

C so those sorts of things make a good teacher, getting to know you and keeping things under control?

M and she like asks what we've done over half term and that

C takes an interest?

L see my teacher doesn't get it – he does the opposite – he doesn't care what you do as long as you do your work but he doesn't tell us anything he'll just stick pages on the board and say go on and do your

work and I think – I don't know what to do , I don't understand? You haven't shown us

C so you don't rate somebody like that?

L no our class is mental while sir was over there are organising a practical, my organiser got ripped up

C So that was your tutor group?

L no we don't have science in tutor- our tutor is pretty good – although sometimes people will like start up and start messing about

C so you transferred from a very small primary school and you were glad to see more people her and some of the teachers were OK, better PE – give me an example of something really good that's happened in the last few days

Long pause

L me joining (local football team)

M me and him have joined (local football team)

L yeah S convinced us into it – he's I our tutor – he's my best mate and he's a good mate to Mike

C so that was a real highlight this week?

M no that was last week

C what about something that happened in school – think about something nice some one did or an event that you think it's good here ?

M there isn't one

L I think swimming will be good today – that's always good cos it's like everyone's relaxed and happy and there's no fights

C so does no fights mean – is that a rare occurrence then?

L yes cos normally in our tutor someone will fight with someone E fell out with someone in out tutor can't remember who I was and she cam to me like wah wah wah, and I said I don't want to get involved and I'm like in the middle of it –

C so you're not too keen on this bad behaviour stuff?

L lately – A – I've fallen out with him cos he doesn't take anything seriously at all – I mean that's why we're on tutor report cos, Mike, when was the last time you saw A not get parked in a lesson –

M a tutor lesson

L you know what I mean – he usually gets parked

C so all the tutor group are on report now

L yeah

M and I'm on report

C so what's this report for Mike?

M my behaviour

C can I have a look – so is this your tutor Mrs M?

L yeah we did have an old one called Mrs R but she went away – I'm not sure what happened to her

C and Mr W- he seems like a good person?

L yeah he's OK to talk to I talk to him sometimes

C so who else would you talk to if you know – needed o talk about something?

L you mean a teacher or?

C anybody in school

L for me I'd go to talk to S(friend) or something – if I needed someone bigger I'd go to my brother or one of his mates

C so you'd talk to friends first

L yeah – teachers would be the last option because

C that's interesting – not even someone last Mr W?

L he'll make you feel better but he won't stop the problem what are they going to do put them on report – that's not going to stop them

C they'd make you feel better but wouldn't make the problem go away – that's interesting- what about you Mike – if you had a problem in school or needed some help with something- what sort of people would you talk to?

M my friends

C not teachers – not classroom assistants or helpers ?

M no

C really – why not?

M cos friends understand and could sort the problem and do stuff about it

C friends do?

L/M yeah

C give me an example?

L when you and K fell out? – when you were in year 7 – when him and K fell out and I was stuck in the middle I like K but I like Mike more – so I knew what K was doing was wrong – he was being really harsh – so I went and spoke to him and said stop it – and basically he said why, why, and I went cos it's unfair – I then started saying what if I did this what if I did that – and basically knocked some sense into him- they are back friends now.

C so people like Mr W or your head of year wouldn't be someone you'd go to?

L no – the only reason I'd go to Mr w (HOY) is for rugby that's it

C In Morton – if you needed help with something or something was going wrong –if there was a problem there – are there people you'd go to about that? Or would you sort it out yourself like you do in school?

M go to people/

C such as who?

M my mate L

L I'd sort it out myself – I'd go up to them and talk

C you wouldn't' got to adults such as, the police or youth workers, or your Mum and Dad?

L the youth workers are never around only on wednesday and fridays that's it – all the other people are out of Morton

C are there people up there trying to sort things out?

M yeah the council

C the council – right – but basically you go to your mates to sort out an issue- do you think that the same for these older kids as well who you say are causing all this trouble – are they sorting things out between themselves ?

L I think cos they are older they want to take control of Morton sort of thing – make sure no-one messes with them or anything like that

M I've got an example. There's this guy who's like 21 and there were these smashed car's windows – everyone knows it was – we called them frenchys because they come from France and we come mates with them – this 21 year old just started beating J up because he thought he's done it – he's trying to take control of the village

C so he was beating up your friend because he thought he had broken the windows

M he couldn't have been him because that night my friend was drunk and when you go to bed when you are that drunk you go fast to sleep don't you – you don't wake up during the night – J went to bed at like 11 and apparently it was done at 3 o'clock and even though he wasn't out at that time

C so this bloke is trying to beat up people who are causing trouble?

M yeah – he like chases loads of people

C does he cause trouble himself?

M yeah sometimes he does – well he used to- he's been to prison for a while- he's come back like trying to take control

L but his kids aint much better though - who are you on about?

M S

L Oh S – he's scary – I'm not going to mess with him – no way

C he's tough?

M well he thinks he's tough

L he is

C so he's trying to sort the village out?

L yeah he's going about it in the wrong way

M he's going around like beating people up

C cos he doesn't think the police can do it and there are others doing a similar thing – you thought of someone else?

M you mean R?

L no, you know the M's – their step dad has got a bit of a temper – we was having a snowball fight – I can't remember which one it was got hit in the face but they went in crying and next time R lobbed a snowball – his dad came out and started to have a go at R – that was harsh – it was a snowball fight

C so this guy who's trying to sort things out he lives in Morton? He doesn't come to school or anything?

L no – he's a nice enough guy if you talk to him but if you get on the wrong side of him then...

C right – but once you get here (in school) do those sorts of things go out of your mind or are you thinking about it?

M it's always at the back of your mind

L the worse thing is when you go on the bus and I think oh I'm going back to a mess- when you come down in the morning you are so relieved you are going to see your mates – yeah it school but you can see who you like

C so coming to school is a bit of a relief? – That's interesting, so it would be good if the trouble didn't come into school?

L now and again it does –

C I remember you told me about an incident when someone told you to hit someone else on their behalf – but generally once you are here you can forget about it for a while?

L there is one problem – if anything does happen in school, it will follow back up to Morton– so if anything happens it will go up there – but anything that happens up there doesn't normally come down here –

C OK – can you give me an example?

M say if you got in a scrap down here yeah – and say you go up and they've got someone older, stronger, much more than you – and they started chasing you, you went back to Morton they will come up and follow you, chase you, they will come at- they don't stop at all – then you don't want to come to school at all – I think no, I'll stay here, it's hard for them to get me

C right – so it can also be place to go back to – to escape?

L once you are up there it's hard getting back down –

C why is that then ?

M well the buses barely happen and it's in the middle of no-where – it's pretty isolated

C so you can feel up there and out of there?

L mm – sometimes my parents will say I wish we lived in Riversville – it would be so much easier – to get anywhere – it's a lot easier to get where you want to and stuff like that

C what about you Mike?

M there was this kid who was trying to catch me – but they just left me – left me alone

C can you get along by yourself there – do your own thing?

M yeah depends what it is

L or sort of ages – there's' people like 8 years playing with 17 – that's what happened yesterday – it's pretty mixed – if someone hates someone they really really do hate em – I mean I think like the chavs up in Morton – if they don't like you, they will tell you and that causes quite a lot and then there's the skaters and emos do the same