Title: Barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum seeking children in schools in England

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Abstract

This article reports a study of the barriers faced by headteachers seeking to include young people categorised as asylum seekers and refugees into secondary schools in England. We trace the new discourses and assemblages of authority created at city level by recent policy changes. Drawing on in-depth interviews with headteachers, we share their experiences of navigating layered ecologies of systemic challenges to their inclusive stance towards provision for newly arrived children. We argue that structural and policy moves in England towards greater emphasis on controlling (im)migration and economistic measures of educational performance, alongside centralised funding and governance and the reduction of place-based regional autonomy, have led to greater invisibility of ASR pupils and to greater vulnerability and visibility/accountability of school leaders. These changes have had an adverse impact on inclusion in English schools and cities.

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Introduction

Almost a decade ago, Pinson, Arnot and Candappa drew attention to the paradox that there were large numbers of asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) pupils in English schools but an absence of central government policy about refugee education. They found that the officials and teachers studied were negotiating their own compassionate and inclusive stance within a hostile rhetoric situated in immigration, rather than education, policy discourse. They were thus able to argue that the 'void left by central government in relation to the education of asylum seeking and refugee children has, to a large extent, been filled by schools and local authorities' (2010: 253).

Nearly 10 years later, and in the context of a widely recognised global migration 'crisis' (Tidey and Gilberton 2017), we consider what has changed in relation to provision for these children. We argue that structural and policy moves in England towards greater emphasis on controlling (im)migration and economistic measures of educational performance, alongside centralised funding and governance and the reduction of place-based regional autonomy, have led to greater vulnerability and invisibility of ASR pupils and to greater vulnerability and visibility/accountability of school leaders. These changes have had an adverse impact on inclusion in English schools and cities. We illustrate this through the perspectives of four headteachers who share their experiences of navigating layered ecologies of systemic influences and challenges to their inclusive stance towards provision for newly arrived children.

International trends in migration and education

Structural and policy changes in England are shaped by international discourses around (im)migration and ‘refugee crises’ and by international educational reforms. Headteachers are at the intersection of how these discourses are experienced in schools when they try to enact a moral and compassionate response to the needs of young migrants.

Before moving on to describing the policy context for the study, we consider some of the debates around migration. There is insufficient space to do this justice here and so we acknowledge firstly that the terminology is often problematic. Human migration is not a recent phenomenon, people have always moved within and across state boundaries, in search of new opportunities or to leave dangerous or hostile environments. However, in recent years movements across state borders have been the subject of increasing national and international concern (Castles, Haas and Miller 2013). Displaced people have always contributed to global, particularly European, historical narratives and the concept of providing refuge is enshrined in international law. Yet recent media and political commentary has concentrated on the numbers of migrants entering and crossing Europe perpetuating the image of an ‘EU …under siege’ and the concept of a ‘refugee crisis’ (Lucassen 2018). Lucassen offers an insightful historical analysis of factors leading to this conceptualisation of ‘crisis’ which has been adopted by mainstream parties across Europe, arguing that a ‘perfect storm’ of factors led to rising anti-immigrant populist views. These position forced migrants as threats to resettlement contexts and negate the social contract between peoples that existed formerly, ‘we face not so much a ‘refugee crisis’ as a complex political, cultural, and socio-economic crisis’ ((2018: 406).

Gatrell refers to the tendency during different times of mass migration for 'making up people' the process of categorizing and labelling within a matrix of administrative, legal, cultural and social practices and relations which he refers to as 'refugee-dom' (2016). Naming and categorising different types of migrants is necessary for policy makers to be able to blur the complex factors that lead to individuals making the choice to move (Zetter 2007). This labelling allows for the provision of bureaucratic processes linked to access and entitlements which 'develop their own rationality and legitimacy' and allow or require different state actors to control the behaviours and experiences of the newly arrived (2007: 180).

One example of bureaucratic practice, which directly controls the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers is that of dispersal. This is the mechanism by which states control the movement of displaced people and the localities within which they are accommodated. Often this leads to spaces being reformed to receive refugees, away from existing cities of sanctuary, meaning that newcomers are not able to access established social networks within communities. In the UK context, cities of sanctuary are places with a history of established practices and commitment to welcoming displaced people. Locating refugees in new communities of dispersal are a means of regulating migration and affect belonging. We return to the policy of dispersal later in the article. We now turn to specific issues of migration in relation to young refugees and asylum seekers.

There is a wide-ranging philosophical, sociological, psychological, economic and statistical research literature on migration and its impact on the development of young people, their identities and outcomes (for e.g. Baumann, 2004; Bronstein et al, 2011; Nussbaum, 2007; UNHCR, 2016; Warman and Worswick , 2016). Pinson, Arnot and Candappa argue that there is, however, 'a gaping hole' in terms of sociological research into ASR children's education, despite this group being 'one of the most socially and economically deprived and discriminated-against' in society (2010: 4). Their empirical and theoretical work on values, morality and the challenge to human rights of the 'non-citizen' ASR child contributes to beginning to plug this gap (Arnot et al, 2005, 2009; Candappa et al, 2000, 2002, 2007). Jacobsen and Landau (2003) argue in a UNHCR working paper that refugee studies generally are often characterised by 'a paucity of good social science' and theoretical sophistication, falling into a trap of what Myron Weiner has called 'advocacy research', 'where a researcher already knows what she wants to see and say, and comes away from the research having "proved" it' (ibid , : 2). Whatever the rights and wrongs of this criticism, it is undeniable that much educational research and writing on ASR children's experience of school is fuelled by the urgency of putting arrangements in place, and so is concerned with school structures and organisational matters, focussing on identifying barriers to inclusion and suggesting practical strategies for overcoming them (e.g. Closs et al, 2001; McCorriston, 2012; Vincent et al, 1998).

Before we explore how barriers to inclusion operate within educations systems, we briefly outline how, just as state migration policies are influenced by international trends and shifts, national educational policy is shaped on the global stage. The ways in which much international educational policy has been influenced by the

market logic of high stakes accountability and competition has been well documented by key commentators in the field (for example, Apple 2016, Rizvi and Lingard 2009, Sahlberg 2011). These writers have analysed the ways in which education systems in the United States, Australia and England have been characterised by an economically influenced model of schooling marked by standardisation of education outcomes. This allows for the monitoring of pupils, teachers, schools, cities and countries (mostly driven by the desire to perform highly in international tables which rank educational performance, such as the PISA tables). Increased accountability, high stakes testing, a narrow curriculum and standardised pedagogical approaches are features of education systems which have followed what Sahlberg describes as a global education reform movement (2011). Various authors have explored who is excluded from this type of ideological reformation of education. There is insufficient space here to do more than offer a few illustrative examples, ethnic minority groups (e.g.Rushek 2016), pupils in high poverty communities (e.g. Berliner 2013), children with special educational needs (e.g. Jahnukainen (2011), and this current paper adds to this by focusing on how headteachers in English schools work within a high stakes education system to accommodate new arrivals.

We begin by setting out the current policy context in England focusing first on educational policy before moving to the immigration policy of dispersal.

The policy context in England

Education

A change of government in the period between Pinson et al's work and our own has led to shifts in educational policy. Two areas of policy development are particularly important to our argument here. First, the programme of academisation, originated by the Labour government in 2000, was accelerated under the Coalition government (2010-15). By 2014, there were twenty times more academies than when the government took office in 2010, by 2018, 72% of secondary schools in England were academies, including free schools and received their funding directly from government rather than through Local Authorities' (NAO, 2018). Simultaneously, measures were taken to centralise the relationship between central government and individual academies and to limit the powers of Local Authorities (LAs).Second, was the move from Every Child Matters (ECM) . ECM policy encouraged a multi-agency, holistic approach to child development and wellbeing by focusing on five desired outcomes (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being). The Coalition government replaced this with a policy focus that foregrounded autonomy, markets and choice as key drivers of social mobility (DfE, 2015). Within schools this equated to a relentless focus on academic attainment evidenced by measurable performance indicators in literacy, numeracy and examination outcomes and an increased emphasis on tracking individuals' progress towards these outcomes (Lingard et al, 2013).

Pinson et al's research found that, even within the holistic ECM policy framework, new arrivals were rendered invisible in national educational discourse. In the early years of the 21st century, however, LAs and schools were, to some extent, able to compensate for gaps

in national provision by seeking to ensure an inclusive educational experience for children at a local level. A decade later, LAs still have responsibility for finding educational places for each child but have reduced influence in the post-2010 landscape of academies and free schools. Schools are independent of LA financial control and are subject to rules being established across Multi Academy Trusts, while facing increased demands to provide indicators of academic attainment and consistent progress.

In a parliamentary debate about an all-party report on social mobility, Hazel Blears, one of the authors of the report, argued for the importance of getting a 'foot in the door' (Hansard 2012); for refugee children this would be admission and access to a broad and balanced education. In theory, new arrivals' situation with regard to school admission is clear. The Human Rights Act 1998 confers right of access to education. The Schools Admissions Code (DfE, 2014) dictates direct duties for maintained schools, and academies and free schools are held to the same code through clauses in their funding agreements with the Secretary of State for Education. All schools must set out how many children in the relevant age group they intend to admit (the published admission number, or PAN) and how applicants will be prioritised where there are more applications than places. The admissions code requires that children in public care ('looked after' children i) must automatically be given the highest priority in over-subscription criteria. Each LA must agree a Fair Access Protocol with schools. All local schools must comply with this, which specifies how school places will be found for 'hard-to-place' children not admitted to school through the usual in-year processes. These protocols must make arrangements for, amongst others, 'children who have been out of education for two months or more; children

of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers; children who are homeless; children with unsupportive families for whom a place has not been sought; children who are carers' (DfE, 2014). Once admitted to school, newly arrived children are likely to attract pupil premium funding, given to schools to support disadvantaged pupils. Unaccompanied ASRs, that is those who are not in the care of an adult when they arrive in the country, are covered by statutory guidance to schools about the rights and support of looked after children.

All children resident in the UK, therefore, have the right to go to school and to be admitted as soon as is possible, though no time limits are specified in the statutory guidelines. A review of the research literature on refugee education makes clear that the current delays in admitting these students to school are not new: Sharma (1987)and Murie and Jeffers(1987) mention the problem in studies conducted in the late 1980s and McDonald, citing research that was conducted in 1994/5, identifies difficulty in finding an appropriate school or college place as one of the barriers confronting new arrivals (McDonald, 1998). Jones and Rutter (2001: 5) point out that new arrivals are more likely to attend unpopular and under-subscribed schools. The link between school admission and housing policies, is what we now explore in more detail.

Dispersal

The 'market position' of asylum seekers has changed since the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, which introduced 'dispersal' policy for those seeking asylum accommodation. Under section 95 of this Act, asylum seekers satisfying a destitution test

can apply for accommodation support while waiting for the consideration of their claim or appeal. If provided, accommodation is in a 'dispersal' area—that is, not in London or the South East of England. The intention behind this regional dispersal policy was to 'relieve the burden on London' (Home Office, 1998: 8.22). Since 2000, therefore, asylum seekers are accommodated, through voluntary agreements and according to agreed ratios, in areas considered to have a greater supply of suitable and affordable housing. A Parliamentary briefing of April 2016 reported that the Home Office had such agreements with 95 LAs (House of Commons Library, 2016).

Until 2012, 'dispersal' was managed through contracts between the Home Office and regional LA consortia. The LAs procured and monitored asylum accommodation and provided some support services to asylum seekers. In 2012 responsibility for managing asylum accommodation passed to three private providers (Serco, G4S and Clearsprings), each of which holds a 'COMPASS' (Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services) contract for two regions of the country. These contracts obligate the contractors to consider a range of factors when identifying properties for dispersal accommodation. As well as cost, these factors include: the availability and concentration of accommodation; the capacity of local health, education and other support services, and the level of risk of social tension if the number of asylum seekers increases within a particular area.

The dispersal policy has not lead to an even geographical distribution of new arrivals. Five times as many are accommodated in the poorest third of country as in richest third, so that in 2017, whilst 174 LAs have none, 10 LAs were responsible for more than a third of all

asylum seekers and these were in the most economically deprived areas of the north west and midlands (Lyons and Duncan 2017).

Two official assessments on the effectiveness of policies on housing and school admissions were released in January 2017. Both were discouraging. The first, a House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee report, concluded that the COMPASS contract system was not working and major reforms were needed. The committee's findings included concerns about the 'disgraceful' and 'shameful' quality of accommodation, the poor treatment by some private accommodation providers, inadequate inspection and compliance systems, the speed of processing applications and appeals, and the uneven participation of LAs leading to the concentration of asylum seekers in a small number of deprived areas.

The second assessment, the Chief Schools Adjudicator's annual report on school admissions, concluded, that it was 'likely' that some LAs did not scrutinise admissions arrangements adequately; unclear admissions policies within multi-academy trusts make it 'difficult to ascertain whether admissions arrangements have been determined as required'; and some children are out of school for too long (2017).

The numbers of children affected by these policies is difficult to ascertain. Brooks (2017) highlights that there are no specific ASR markers in the school census, and that no government department publishes statistics on where newly arrived children are living and going to school, the quality of the provision for them or their outcomes.

With respect to the school accountability systems, newcomers entering in year 10 or 11 will not count in the school's progress scores if they arrive from a non-English speaking country (DfE 2018). The *School Inspection Handbook* (Ofsted, 2016) makes no mention of refugees or asylum seekers. Ostensibly this is to encourage schools to accommodate new arrivals but, consrquently, ASR young people become invisible in data reporting mechanisms.

We now turn to our study to explore how these immigration and education structures and policies are experienced at the ground level by headteachers seeking to welcome and include refugee and asylum seeking children.

The study

Our research question in this study was about the barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum seeking children in English schools. We were particularly interested in the enactment and impact of national policies at city level. The city we have based the study on is a dispersal city matching the descriptors outlined in the preceding section.

Data reported in this paper are derived from an approach that seeks to recognise the importance of local ecologies. Our focus is on showing how barriers to inclusion are erected at school level in response to the logic and rhetoric of current national and local education and immigration policies and then how they play out at city level. To do this we have drawn on the experiences of four headteachers as they interact with and navigate the different systemic influences in their role as gatekeeper for new arrivals to their school.

We have found Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (ECT) (1993) a useful lens through which to understand this. ECT conceptualises an individual within a nest of embedded structures or systems of influence, (*microsystem*, *mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem)* as multiple layers of social structures within a *chronosystem* of transitions through time. Bronfrenbrenner's theory has been utilised by studies of newly arrived children in England (Rutter 1999) and in New Zealand (Hamilton and Moore 2004), to emphasise the importance of pre- and trans-migration experiences to post-migration education. Rutter argues this is especially important in England because of the dominance in education policy of school effectiveness approaches that 'place little emphasis on out of school social factors that influence children's progress' (p4). Paat draws on ECT to explore immigrant children and their families' 'interactions of various environmental settings in a person-process-context-time model' to help inform social work practice with new arrivals (2013). ECT has also been used in interesting ways to consider inclusive schooling for children from poverty and children with disabilities (Hackett, Hudson, West and Brown 2016, Singal 2006). Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler (2014) powerfully reconceptualise Bronfenbrenner to develop an ecology of inclusive education which allows for the messiness, complexity and changeable nature of schools and the relationships and connections within and between the systems they interact with and are influenced by. An ecosystemic theory for thinking about inclusive schooling for new arrivals therefore underpins our study.

The city in which the study took place was identified in the bottom eight of most deprived areas in the country in the 2015 Office of National Statistics Index of Deprivation.

Educational performance in the city is well below national averages with the city regularly appearing at the bottom of rankings tables of education authorities nationwide.

We set out to investigate our research questions through interviews with headteachers we are acquainted with professionally, in the hope that they would trust us enough to explain some of the complexities of what are clearly sensitive issues. The head-teachers we interviewed are from four secondary schools serving different parts of the city, two in the city centre, one on a well-established estate of public housing on the city's ring-road and one on the outskirts of the city. We chose headteachers we thought had a commitment to social inclusion and experience of trying to make it work in the everyday lives of their schools. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour; they were transcribed, coded and thematised.

The four headteachers and their schools are briefly described below. In order to preserve anonymity, pseudonyms are used and descriptive detail is taken from published national inspection reports over the past 5 years. At the time of the interviews, all schools in the city were under pressure to improve their performance in school league tables. All schools were located in areas of the city identified as having high indicators of deprivation. Many new arrivals into the city seek support from a refugee support charity which identified the largest number of their clients' countries of origin in 2017 as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Eritrea and Afghanistan.

INSERT TABLE 1

The headteachers identified barriers at the school and the city level. We begin with two main areas of challenge at the school level.

School level challenges

(i) Official processes and procedures.

Despite commitment to inclusion, none of the headteachers could be sure exactly how many ASR students were in their schools. There were two main reasons for this. The first related to the difficulties of obtaining accurate first-hand information. The heads mentioned social and cultural issues and language barriers which made 'trying to really get a grip of the story not necessarily easy' (Nancy). .

These difficulties were exacerbated by students' mobility, often having to move on to other schools, and by changes in their status. Nancy, responding to how many asylum seeking or refugee pupils were on role described ' an ever-moving feast really. It'll be thirty, forty, fifty, depending, and obviously some of those people don't stay. Some of them will move on, particularly those that are LAC [looked after children]'.The second main reason related to the schools' management information systems. Having the appropriate boxes ticked was very important to the schools for a variety of reasons, including safeguarding and funding. But the technologies available to the schools did not necessarily record what they needed :

> even though you have a box for ethnicity, that doesn't always give you an opportunity to capture who they are, you know; that breakdown doesn't take you into refugees or new arrivals. (Nick)

Each headteacher wanted fuller and more accurate information about these students. They considered that 'the labels are crucial' (Nick) to their own decision-making, though they recognised a sensitivity about the process of labelling:

> Not that we want to label, but we want to put the support in place (Patrick)

> it's helpful to know a bit about the background to think about the sorts of experiences and whether there is any work that our school counsellor might need to do around those youngsters but I don't know that the label is necessarily helpful for them (Nancy)

The labels required 'people telling you the truth' (Edward) and echoed the bureaucracy that surrounds migration, which Nick recognised could trap individuals in fabricated difficult to escape identities:

> If a child arrives in a country, taking a route through another European country perhaps, and the paperwork that they present - or is presented on their behalf - is at total mismatch to the reality of their lives, they're going to have to lead a double life…that is a lot for a child to take in and exist in that….you know, the suffering

> that some of our youngsters have experienced where they've come from, they're going to have to run with this. They haven't got an option. It's a stolen childhood in many ways (Nick)

In particular, the heads mentioned misidentification in official documentation of children who had spent periods of time in European refugee camps and were wrongly recorded as, originating from France, Italy or Greece. They were generally frustrated by the delays in admitting students to schools and bureaucratic procedures proved unhelpful

> So we've got Fair Access arrangements, which are around looking at how we place students who are deemed 'hard to place'. Now they're not obviously **all** hard to place. Just because they're coming from a country where there's conflict and they're coming as refugees, it doesn't necessarily mean to say they're hard to place. But I think sometimes because of that profile, they get labelled as hard to place. And those Fair Access meetings don't take place weekly, so…you're waiting for the next meeting. (Nancy)

A more fundamental problem, which the headteachers referred to, was a perceived reluctance amongst other heads to admit ASR children to their schools..This angered and frustrated all of the heads in the sample.

> I have heard, admittedly second hand, in other words from families, they turn up and they're told, 'You go to [Fieldback] because they're good with EAL [English

> as an Additional Language]', which I found a joke when it was in [special] measures and it was, you know, 'You go there'. Our perception as a body of staff is that it's been a dumping ground. We take more students through Fair Access Panels than any other school. (Patrick)

Edward illustrated the tone of the meetings with an example about a year 11 student whose case came to the Panel:

> No one wanted to take this young man because they realised the implications for them as a school, that they would take a hit in their outcomes, and that's the problem. There's a disincentive, a negative incentive, for these children to receive help because of issues of accountability. … I did say, 'Look. We'll take him on to our books', you know, with a heavy heart to be honest, knowing that, much as I was pleased to help this young man, I was going to have to go back and explain to my colleagues who are working terribly hard to make sure that our outcomes are as they should be, that this was in a sense a statistical headwind that they would have to run into… So it can be quite a divisive thing. It's divisive. (Edward)

Patrick's school was particularly likely to be required to accommodate ASR students because it was not full:

> We've had close to forty in-year admissions in one week because we weren't up to PAN. You can't say no. (Patrick)

The heads were candid about the ways they felt that some headteachers circumvented this problem through dropping the PAN to avoid being made vulnerable to accepting huge numbers of transient children.

Edward explained that his aim was to create an inclusive school but the lack of balance in the system made this position a vulnerable one:

> Actually it’s a real joy to be able to help refugees who come in. We want to take our fair share and do so joyously. My reservations are that not all schools do and that creates sort of perverse incentives to avoid taking vulnerable children like that…We’re somewhat overwhelmed. I don’t like to say we’re dumped on because it sounds like we’re just moaning, but actually we are … We can’t be everything to everyone, but we’re having to be everything to everyone. We’re being judged on the same accountability measures and we don’t always do as good a job as we should do as a result of that. (Edward)

(ii) Resources

All of the headteachers were concerned about levels of resourcing in terms of funding, ‘there needs to be a way of funding this better so that you’ve got much more resource that you can use and provide a much more specialist support’ (Nancy), Managing group sizes, and midyear admissions and being able to accommodate students’ particular interests and skills created headaches:

> if a child is quite good at a certain subject that they've done, and they arrive and suddenly that option is full I can't hire a new teacher to teach art at Key Stage 4 just because of one child. The shortcut I'm going to take there is to put that child in a different class. And that's criminal. That there has robbed a child of the chance of, not just a good grade but maybe a career. And we do do this (Nick)

Patrick, like the other heads, was concerned about money but, having advertised unsuccessfully five times for a head of Special Educational Needs, was more concerned about the recruitment of suitably skilled staff. All the heads worried about the difficulties of assessing the special needs of children who did not speak English, particularly where the difficulties were exacerbated because the child had experienced significant trauma. The current secondary school curriculum was seen as rigid and inflexible, and overly focused for new arrivals on EAL (which was considered important, but not to the exclusion of all else).

> The older they are when they arrive, potentially the more difficult it is because of the rigours of the exam process etc., and the amount of time that you've got to prepare the students (Nancy)

> We need to take a step back and actually think about whether our provision as it is, is fit for purpose. Whether we will continue with this one-size-fits all. In other words, 'This is my curriculum. You've arrived, and you're going to slot straight into my curriculum and I'm going to find ways to make you access this curriculum'.

> And that usually has been language-centred…, I don't think that is the most comprehensive package that we can offer (Nick)

The other resource seen as lacking – apart from money and teachers – was time. There was no time to offer the 'comprehensive package' that Nick wanted for his students, partly because of the rigidity of the curriculum requirements and the shortage of funds, but also because time was a scarce commodity for both teachers and students and, for refugee students, it seemed to be running out. All the headteachers mentioned this. Nancy described there being :

> 'a sense of urgency around those students in terms of: what are they going to do post-16?... I think that one of the problems is that, you know, being able to see, if you've had a lot of displacement, being able to see, you know, to the next five years of, this is what I might do. This is where I might be. It's quite difficult. (Nancy)

Faced with bureaucratic, curricular and procedural challenges the headteachers adopted different strategies. These were personally inflected but also related to the areas their schools served. We move on now to consider the challenges raised at the city level.

City level challenges

Nick, saw his school as at the heart of a socially and economically disadvantaged community with a long history of migration; he saw himself as 'sit[ting] right in the middle', with responsibilities to make the school welcoming, manage the resources made

available and bridge some of the differences of perspective between new arrivals and longer standing residents:

> I look at the impact in terms of the whole community impact. So you've got a community that's challenged in terms of the economic activities, in terms of access to services, in terms of economic wellbeing and those deprivation factors that they have - those indigenous people within [the area] have their own struggles already. So when a new group arrives into the area, the immediate reaction on a human level, it can go two ways. It can be welcoming, but welcoming in terms of, 'Here's what it's about'. It's paradoxical in many ways because if you're fleeing extreme violence and extreme deprivation, you'll probably arrive at [the area] and think, 'This is great. It's an oasis. It's a salvation', and then you arrive to natives who think it's *not* great. There's that sort of immediate mismatch in terms of the views (Nick)

Nancy's school, in contrast, served a community that was economically disadvantaged but not historically diverse. She had a sharp sense of potential conflict involved in 'placing people who are quite vulnerable into an environment which is already quite highly disadvantaged and doesn't necessarily accommodate newcomers very well'. She emphasised realism, reiterating that the school's job was 'to do what we can', to be inclusive and create a place where students and staff felt they belonged. She saw the school as 'an oasis' where some more extreme views that were voiced on the estate were silenced.

> .. I’ve said quite often that we will know we’ve really cracked it when the kids are changed, not just changed for the six hours that they’re with us, but they’re actually going back into their communities and challenging some of the views of their parents and their friends. Now that’s a massively idealistic way of looking at things but I guess that’s ultimately where you want to get to, where inclusion goes way beyond the school gates (Nancy)

Patrick, was focussed on trying to create an orderly and safe environment and to rebuild the school’s reputation after a series of poor inspection outcomes. He had a strong sense of moral purpose and wanted to put things right: ‘I often say to the leaders, you know what? If it was perfect, we wouldn’t be here, and the reason that we’re here is that it ain’t right.’ He was creating links with his diverse and often disadvantaged community, but was finding it difficult.

> We’ve tried all sorts of different things, you know, cake, coffee mornings, world foods, and so forth. Was it an open evening where one of the parents literally took -… all the food on the plates. I don’t mind because they obviously needed it, if you know what I mean, but that’s the reality of the world that these families are living in. Literally she was filling her bag with food for the people at home.… and then left before we could do a tour.

Faced with situations that were ‘quite heart-breaking at times’, he intended to deal systematically and effectively with the welfare issues that urgently claimed so much of his attention.

In these three schools particularly, poor housing had a direct negative impact on the schools’ work with ASR students, not only because they lacked suitable space for studying, but also because they experienced levels of stress, distress and ill health that were exacerbated by living in poverty and the constant threat of being moved on. Situated in poorer areas of the city where private rental accommodation was cheapest, the schools were struggling to meet the demands of what Jonathan Darling (2017) calls ‘a profoundly uneven geography…dominated by cutting costs and housing asylum seekers in areas of existing social deprivation, often without fully preparing the communities to which asylum seekers are dispersed’. Superficially unified by low rents and economic disadvantage, the areas were i very different socially, culturally and politically and these differences had a profound impact on the work the school needed to do to help the ASR students settle in and make good educational progress.

Edward’s school was different again. As a faith school, ‘sort of bridging the two communities, the county and the city’, it attracted students ‘who go out of their way to come here because it’s a church school’, including a significant proportion of children from African countries, and ‘others who come out of their way to come here because of its diversity.’ Recognising that as a school on the edge, local families might choose to send their children to the county schools serving wealthier communities just over the LA border,

Edward intended attracting students from community of the like-minded, rather than from a narrower place-based community. He used marketing to highlight the values of inclusion and diversity, with the aim of creating as comprehensive a school as possible.

> …we're not backwards in using the diversity of this school and being proud of it and using it as a marketing tool... You want people to buy into the diversity of the school. We want to say, 'Well this is who we are. If this is right for you, then come to us', and I'll often say to parents, 'Come to us because you will see the world as it is. You'll see people from all different backgrounds and we think that comprehensive education should be exactly that,' and without putting other schools down, because of their locations or their active choices, they are simply not comprehensive. They're state funded but they're not comprehensive… We use it as a marketing tool almost to say, 'This is who we are. It's part of our DNA as a school.' (Edward)

This kind of marketing discourse was not available to the other three headteachers, whose schools were similarly diverse but in more run-down areas of the city. Edward was doing what he could to try to build a socially comprehensive intake. That included promoting diversity while simultaneously limiting the admissions numbers to retain the power of the school to refuse to take certain students.

Discussion

Bronfrenbrenner has been helpful to our understanding of how headteachers' inclusion of new arrivals involve navigating different layers of societal systems. In this we conceive of

the school and the city existing within social, political, historical and global contexts. International discourses around the conceptualisation of a global refugee crisis, international responses to control movement and labelling at this level have led to national dispersal policies affecting individual cities. At the same time global educational reforms with strict accountability measures are also affecting individual places within national systems. The heads are working within communities and city recognised as a dispersal area and where deprivation and educational outcomes are key factors in their city's performance in national league tables. The heads are the face of these relationships and connections and simultaneously have to represent the needs and demands of their communities, their schools and the new arrival.

At city level, the COMPASS agreements significantly altered the role of LAs in enacting the dispersal policy. Within dispersal cities there are new assemblages of authority, with private providers working more closely with the Home Office and LAs taking a marginal role in planning and procuring accommodation processes, which has intensified pressure on services in particular low-rent areas.. In effect, this transfer of authority constitutes a recentralisation of power away from locally elected bodies (Darling, 2016; Wood and Flinders, 2014). Commenting on this process, Wood and Flinders point out that it involves not simply the 'withdrawal of politicians from the direct control of a vast range of functions' as the market takes priority, but also a 'de-politicisation' of the debate so that the dispersal of new arrivals becomes seen primarily as a technical and managerial matter (2014: 156).

All four heads were deeply concerned about the inequities in the way ASR students were admitted to schools. Two of them spoke of students "dumped" on them, language arising

directly from the discursive framing of asylum seekers as a "burden" in government policy documents (e.g. Home Office, 1998: 8.22). As Darling (2016) indicates, "spreading the burden" has become the dominant rhetorical device to describe the dispersal and accommodation process. Squire highlighted in 2009 the UK's history of treating asylum as a profit-making business (e.g. through private firms running detention centres). The normalisation of this approach, alongside the idea that providing education for ASR children is a burden, and that refugees and asylum seekers should be dispersed", repositions work that might otherwise have been understood through a lens of justice and human rights, putting it into an economistic frame. Over time, these new logics gain the status of common sense.

The headteachers' frustration at what they are experiencing at city level reflects the consequences of national educational policy. All schools are required to make provision for the welfare requirements of their students, but as the school system in England becomes more fragmented and as cohesion relies on settlements and accommodations between 'competing' trusts and alliances rather than city-wide mediation, the disparities between schools in low- and higher-rent areas of dispersal cities are multiplying.

As the disparities multiply, so do the policy paradoxes. The revised funding formula for schools, presented as an equity measure, is currently reducing per capita funding in schools with high concentrations of ASR students. Accountability policies, also presented as equity measures that challenge schools to address the under-performance of poor and disadvantaged students, are making some schools reluctant to offer places to those same

poor and disadvantaged students. School improvement and social mobility policies that focus overwhelmingly on examination results largely disregard the potential impact of schools on other policy areas acknowledged nationally as in need of amelioration, such as managing mental health, supporting parents and building community cohesion- policy spaces that the headteachers in our study were also navigating.

At school level, although they were frustrated and sometimes angry about the system's inequalities, it was notable that the heads all had a strong sense of personal agency and moral imperative. However, this was generally tempered by a sense that whatever they achieved would not be good enough. They generally struggled to recruit and retain good teachers ; in part they attributed this to the fact that so much of the extra work the teachers had to do would go unrecognised in accountability systems. They were worried about funding, but even more worried about time. They experienced the curriculum as rigid and over-full, controlled by national school level accountability technologies that allowed them very little flexibility to meet the special needs of ASR students. Even extra-curricular time was consumed with 'intervention', practice classes designed to help students pass their exams and meet the requirements of accountability . Meanwhile, they could see that time was ticking away for these students. They saw the deliberate delays, the hedging and bureaucratic problems the young people experienced in finding a school place; alongside this, they knew how beneficial it could be for ASR students to be settled quickly into a new school in their new country (Jones and Rutter, 1998:9). They could see the short amount

of time the students had to make progress and gain qualifications. They saw how difficult it was for some students to envisage a future for themselves.

The principles of designing a good educational experience for ASR students are well established in educational literature and unlikely to seem radical, dangerous or utopian to most teachers (Hamilton et al, 2004; Rutter, 1999). In essence, they require teachers to use their expertise to analyse the pre- and trans- migration educational experiences of students; to tailor post-migration schooling to the child rather than the system; to find ways to help students regain some of their lost educational capital . These students are entitled to a curriculum rich in content-knowledge, skill-development and experiential learning, as well as English language learning. Yet in our schools, despite the headteachers' commitment to inclusion, the realities of school life foreclosed any possibility of planning for how to educate ASR students. At best, the schools could offer pastoral care and extra support in English. The young person's social integration into the school was conflated with a simplistic view of educational integration as 'main-streaming' the student as soon as possible.

Recently, the side-lining and circumvention of LA involvement and control has been a consistent thread in central government politics. Our headteachers' perspectives have illustrated the consequences of this devolution strategy at the school and city level. Central government retains political power while operational responsibilities are put out to tender. This leads to new markets emerging for non-state actors, including academy chains, in the new 'school-led' education system and in the provision of emergency accommodation.

These new arrangements have effectively privatised solutions to problems that were previously understood as matters of local politics and collective democratic decision-making. The living conditions and the education of ASR families and unaccompanied child migrants are 'buried from the gaze of politics and effectively seen within the sphere of individual, private problems' (Lowndes and Gardner, 2016). So those young people who fit the category of ASR become hard to spot and to track in the education system. They find themselves in a maze of bureaucracy and in need of 'dispersal'. What this means in reality is that they experience prolonged insecurity, in terms of having a safe and appropriate place to live and in accessing the education they are entitled to.

Conclusion

What then has changed in the years since Pinson et al conducted their studies?

Over time the relationships with systemic structures and influences have changed for the headteachers. The chronosystem reflects the shift in assemblages of authority such that heads are gatekeepers and mediators of structural processes internally and externally as their schools and the communities they are located within are shaped by inter/national policy shifts. They no longer have the buffer of the LA and are made vulnerable to place-based issues at both the city and school level which are directly influenced by national immigration and education policy in turn interacting with global policy narratives about crises of migration and of the need for educational reform. The heads, seeking to include newly arrived vulnerable children, are caught within a multi-layered immigration-education performance nexus.

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A decade on from Pinson et al, the revised assemblage of centralised (with minimized local) government, a self-improving school-led system and a policy of individual social mobility has led to school leaders attempting to make choices about the education of the most vulnerable in society based upon the shifting sands of a morality rooted in forced pragmatism. Ostensibly, not much has changed in that schools still strive to compensate for gaps in national provision for these children. However without local or national authority structures to act as a buffer, the risks are greater for the newly arrived, for individual headteachers and for the future of an inclusive society in England.

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Table 1: Headteachers and their schools

Headteacher	School	Above national average pupil numbers for			Location	Other comments
		EAL	SEND	FSM		
Nick	Parkfield Academy	✓	✓	✓	in a culturally and ethnically diverse community in one of the most deprived wards within the city centre	Inspection reports recognised Parkfield's work to promote equality and respect for multicultural Britain
Nancy	Meadowland School	✓	✓	✓	a historically homogenous estate community in a locality marked by indicators of economic deprivation	Worked closely with LA support team for minority groups; Inspection reports praised the ways the school supports pupils who joined the school part way through the academic year especially those with limited English
Patrick	Fieldback Academy	✓	✓	✓	a very diverse and economically disadvantaged community in the city centre	Inspection reports praised the school's pastoral system and the support for pupils with little or no English
Edward	Riverbank Academy (Faith school)	✓	✓	✓	located on the edges of the city, the catchment was wider than the local environs	Inspection reports praised how pupils from all faiths were welcomed and the culturally diverse community of the school