Volume 1

Taking up the Challenge: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding the presence of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (ASR) within mainstream primary schools in the Midlands, and the implications this may hold for Educational Psychologists practice.

by

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Abstract

The increase in Asylum Seeker and Refugee (ASR) applications in recent decades (Hart, 2009) has led to an increase in the numbers of ASR children attending schools in the UK. This study utilises Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a relatively new qualitative research approach within psychology (Smith et al., 2010), to gain the perceptions of a cohort of teachers who work on the 'front line' with these pupils to understand the impact their presence has on those teachers, their classrooms and the wider school and community. Using IPA has allowed the researcher to add a distinct psychological perspective to the limited extant research literature in the field, and has provided rich and contextualised accounts regarding the teachers' perceptions of those children. The findings suggest that these teachers are generally optimistic about ASR children and recognise the important protective role schools can play in supporting them. However set within a context of rising work pressures some of the teachers' frustrations with the wider systems are surfaced and the impact on ASR children is discussed. The study discusses how psychological theory can be adopted to support teachers in their work alongside ASR children and the role educational psychologists should play in supporting this agenda.

To Kerry...

For your unstinting support, patience and understanding during those long hours I

have spent locked away in the office.

To my parents...

Thank you for your support

To Richard and Wendy Bradley...

I know you both would have been proud; at last I have fulfilled the early promise.

To Jan...

I would not have ever considered that I could have ever come so far without your

support and encouragement during those early years

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASR...   Asylum Seeker and Refugee

BERA...   British Educational Research Association

BPS...   British Psychological Society

EAL...   English as an Additional Language

EMAG...   Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant

EMPSU... Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit

EP...   Educational Psychologist

HPC...   Health Professionals Council

IPA...   Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

ITT...   Initial Teacher Training

LA...   Local Authority

SEBD...   Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

SEN...   Special Educational Needs

TEP...   Trainee Educational Psychologist

UASC...   Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

UNESCO...United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1. Rationale

This thesis is written in part requirement toward the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate. The choice of topic emerged from my experience of working alongside teachers as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), within an urban, multi-cultural context in a large local authority in the Midlands. Within this context the numbers of ASR children attending schools has increased over the last 10 years (Arnot and Pinson, 2005) and teachers I have worked alongside have expressed concerns about their ability to meet their specific and often diverse needs. This small-scale research project is concerned with understanding the perceptions of a cohort of teachers' regarding the presence of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (ASR) within their classrooms, and the implications this may hold for educational psychologists (EPs) practice.

2. Research Strategy

To inform the literature review a wide-ranging search strategy was employed in order to access suitable, current, authoritative, relevant and credible sources. Major bibliographical search engines were accessed including SwetsWise, PsychInfo, EBSCO and ERIC, drawing articles and books from psychology, education, social work, medicine (psychiatry) and sociology. The majority of these papers and books were from the UK, USA and Australia and preference was given to those twenty

years old or less. Terms used within these searches included asylum seeker/refugee, education, teacher, school, psychology, teacher perceptions/ views, EAL, trauma and hostility. Well in excess of 500 studies related to ASRs were identified but the majority were deemed to be inappropriate or to lack relevance to the research topic. In addition non-academic sources were identified using the terminology outlined above, such as information gathered from charitable organisations concerning asylum seekers and refugees, to governmental policy, statistics and guidance.

3. Definition of Terms

The terms 'refugee' and 'asylum-seeker' have specific legal meanings:-

"A refugee is someone who has gained refugee status under the 1951 UN convention relating to the status of refugees" (Hek, 2005a, p2).

This may include *"people with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion"* within their country of origin (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).

An asylum-seeker can be defined as:-

"...a person who applies to be recognised as a refugee under this definition. If successful they will be granted refugee status" (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).

...someone "*who has crossed an international border in search of safety and applies to be given refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention*" (Hek, 2005a, p.2)*.*

Within this study the terms asylum seeker and refugee (ASR) will be used collectively to refer to children and young people (or their parents) who have been granted discretionary leave to remain (German and Ehntholt, 2007), have recognised refugee status or have applied for asylum in the UK (Hek, 2005a).

4. Research Context

The increase in ASR applications nationally in recent decades (Hart, 2009) and the system of dispersal (Appa, 2005), which has placed ASR people within towns and cities across the UK, has placed increasing financial and resource pressures on Local Authority (LA) services such as housing and education. This in turn has led to contrasting views within society regarding ASR people, ranging from those concerned at the perceived 'loss of Britishness' and the perception that Britain operates an 'open door' policy in regard to ASR people, and those concerned with social justice, who view Britain's role toward ASR as one of moral obligation towards those in need of refuge (Arnot et al., 2009). The slightly confused response to the

arrival of ASR people in the UK is reflected within educational policy towards ASR where governmental rhetoric regarding legal rights and inclusion is set against, for example, a surprising lack of data regarding how many ASR children actually attend schools in the UK (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). The slow response towards ASR children from those concerned with education is reflected in the fact that the academic literature in relation to ASR children is relatively immature, and has only begun to emerge during the last 15 years.

Previous research (Hek, 2005b) has tended to focus on directly eliciting the experiences of ASR pupils' and attempting to understand what constitutes good practice when working alongside them. The nature of this research reflects the academic traditions from which it is conducted. For example sociological research has tended to focus upon structural and societal inequalities (Arnot and Pinson, 2005), whilst psychological research has traditionally focussed upon the emotional experiences of individual ASR pupil's (Rutter, 2003). However I feel that the teachers' perspective has been relatively ignored.

5. Methodological Orientation

This research project seeks to build on the extant research base from a phenomenological perspective, using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a distinctive and emerging research approach to qualitative inquiry (Smith et al., 2010). In the apparent absence of an interpretivist perspective this study will seek to focus on the personal perceptions of teachers' towards ASR children. The study will

also seek to reveal the way in which the teachers' understand and conceptualise the experiences of ASR children within their school. Furthermore the impact the presence of ASR children has on the school system and those that work within it will be addressed.

6. Structure of Volume One

This thesis is organised as follows.

Chapter One The Literature Review. The review begins by setting the arrival of ASR people in context, and discusses some of the difficulties ASR people face in attempting to settle within the UK. The second section focuses on the education of ASR children and the way in which LAs and schools seek to meet the needs of ASR pupils. The third part focuses on what is presently known regarding the experiences of teachers' working alongside ASR pupils. The fourth section focuses on the ways in which psychologists, including EPs, have presently sought to support schools in meeting the needs of ASR pupils.

Chapter Two Methodology. The methodology section considers my own epistemological and ontological stance in relation to the present research and my rationale for choosing IPA as a methodology/method. The specific research questions are developed and the underlying rationale for this explained. There is also a detailed exploration of the research process including ethical considerations and the role of reliability, validity and reflexivity in qualitative approaches such as IPA.

Chapter Three Findings. The findings section contains an in-depth analysis of the teachers' perceptions. It begins with an overview of the superordinate themes identified and provides a more detailed analysis of the sub-themes that emerged. The reflexive role of the role of researcher is also considered.

Chapter Four Discussion. The key findings from the study are presented and discussed and where appropriate linked to psychological theory and understanding. The implications of this study for EP practice are considered, limitations identified and potential areas for future research discussed.

Chapter Five Conclusion. The conclusion provides a summary of the research and contains some concluding reflections.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.0 Literature Review

1.1 Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Context

1.1.1 The Century of the Refugee

Schuster (1998) argued that the 20th century could be regarded as the century of the refugee. Clearly "*being a refugee, fleeing persecution and seeking asylum was not a new phenomenon*" (Hart, 2009, p.350), however the number of those seeking a safer existence increased substantially with the numerous conflicts and sites of political instability globally. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2009) the number of people forcibly displaced stood at 42 million, with 80 percent from developing nations. Refugees make up around 10.5 million of these with a further 839,000 asylum seekers having applied for refugee status globally. Contrary to popular belief around 80% of these vulnerable people are hosted by developing countries with the remaining 20% spread throughout First and Second World nations. Within the UK the number of asylum applications has increased substantially over recent decades (Hart, 2009), although overall applications for asylum have more than halved since 1999. Last year however the number of applications for asylum (25,930) did rise slightly in comparison to preceding years (Home Office, 2009a).

1.1.2 The Midlands Context

The general rise in asylum and refugee applications over recent decades has led to the introduction of a national dispersal system of ASRs across the UK. This was introduced following the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) and has been implemented through the creation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) (Appa, 2005). Whilst this has taken the pressure off local authorities (LAs) in the south-east of the UK it has presented LAs in other areas with distinct challenges, particularly in relation to housing, social care, health and education (Rutter, 2003)

Accurate figures regarding ASRs can be difficult to ascertain, however the Information Centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugee's (ICAR, 2007) reports that in 2007, within the large Midlands local authority in which the present study is conducted, there were around 30,000 ASR people, of whom 27,240 were refugees and around 3,000 asylum seekers. The Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU, 2009) believe there were approximately 247 newly arrived children receiving bursaries in schools across this local authority in 2007, of whom around 25% might be considered ASR's. Overall there were estimated to be around 1000 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) within the authority (ICAR, 2007). The lack of accurate statistics regarding the presence of ASR seems extraordinary, however high mobility within the ASR population can make accurate recording difficult (Pinson et al., 2010).

1.1.3 A Hostile Context

During the last decade the arrival of ASRs in the UK has attracted significant societal attention, much of it negative, which has led to ASR immigration being perceived as a 'problem' that requires controlling (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). Significant concerns exist within parts of British society regarding immigration and the loss of the construct of 'Britishness' that some feel has occurred, alongside the perceived resource pressures their arrival has created, within for example housing and health (Finney, 2005).

The political response to ASR people is often an attempt to balance public opinion with the needs of the wider economy. The recent trend has been to become more draconian in attempts to limit the numbers of ASR's entering the country (Schuster, 2002), recently exemplified in the cap on non-EU migration proposed by the UK Government (BBC News, 2010a). ASR numbers are being limited through increasingly tighter admittance procedures and their entitlements and access to services, whilst in the UK, are also being restricted (Arnot et al., 2009). For ASR children in particular this has a significant impact on their experiences within the UK and may further negatively impact on their long-term psychological well-being. Furthermore, reports that hundreds of UASC were deported by the UK government, despite questions regarding whether it was detrimental to their well-being, highlight the fragility of ASR existence within the UK (Children and Young People Now, 2010).

As technological advancements, political instability and the disparity between rich and poor continues to grow globally we might feasibly expect the century of the refugee to extend well into the 21st century, so the issue of ASRs, our treatment of them and their subsequent integration into society, becomes an ever more pressing issue to address. However the 'construction' of ASRs as 'aliens' (Alien Act, 1905) appears to have become embedded within parts of the British psyche. Asylum seekers and refugees are, as Arnot et al. (2009, p.249) argue, "...*physically and symbolically out of place, the others in our midst*" and can experience hostility and exclusion by wider society, particularly through the press who exert a powerful influence over public opinion (Patel and Mahtani, 2007). For example ASRs experience public stigmatisation by the press who appear to zealously highlight those who may be seeking asylum and claiming welfare benefits (Rutter, 2003).

From a psychological perspective ASR people may fall victim to inter-group attribution errors, characterised by ethnocentrism or in-group bias, which may form the basis of stereotypes and prejudice (Hogg and Vaughan, 1998). For example positive in-group behaviours and negative out-group behaviours are often attributed to dispositional factors, whilst negative in-group and positive out-group behaviours are viewed as deriving from situational factors. Stereotypes are formed through these over-simplified attributions about the fundamental characteristics of others (Brown, 1995) and can be formed by cognitively connecting a negative event with a specific social group, based on true or erroneous correlations (Meiser and Hewstone, 2004). A lack of interaction and contact between the wider population and ASR people, and

the lack of understanding that results, may only serve to reinforce this (Verkuyten, 2005).

The role of the media in setting the anti-ASR agenda in society requires further research but undoubtedly there are concerns within society regarding the 'genuineness' of ASRs and the 'preferential treatment' they supposedly receive (Finney, 2005). However it would be too simplistic simply to suggest that ASR people experience prejudice based on stereotypical attitudes because these attitudes within society are not universal. Furthermore within this stance there is an implicit underlying assumption that attitudes are an unavoidable, essentialist consequence of an individual's cognitive activity (Verkuyten, 2003). This explanation of human thought takes no account of the contexts that define the attitudes people hold, and the vital role of language and 'rhetoric' is ignored (Hepburn, 2003).

Many ASR people experience difficulties on arrival in the UK, not least from a society which, at times, appears to be instinctively hostile to their presence and inherently mistrustful of their motives. However this study adopts what I consider to be a 'humane' position towards ASR people. From my perspective it appears to be 'morally just' to welcome ASR people to the country given the often traumatic backgrounds they hail from, alongside the richness in diversity and culture that they contribute to British society. My own experiences personally and professionally have contributed to my assimilating this viewpoint, and have underpinned the underlying motivation to address the present topic within my research. I accept that is my own perception of what is right and reflects my own personal value base and is part of the

lens through which I view the world. I also acknowledge that this will have undoubtedly influenced the way in which I have approached this study, from the formulation of the topic through to the collection and interpretation of the data.

1.1.4 The Educational Context

There has been a succession of legislative changes in relation to ASRs over the last twenty years within the UK (Rutter, 2003); however within this legislation there is a continued absence of consideration for the children of asylum seekers and refugees, and the impact of their experiences within the legal system. Rutter (2003) notes that the rights of these children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) may well be contravened, due to the government's lack of consideration regarding how legislation designed to discourage adult entry to the country impacts on children. The experiences of ASR children, prior to and on arrival in the UK, forms a challenging backdrop to the work of education professionals seeking to develop inclusive and welcoming environments which are largely at odds with the wider legislative and societal messages ASR children receive (Arnot et al., 2009).

Education is an important strand in meeting the needs of ASR children, as it supports their integration into wider society (Ager and Strang, 2004). For ASR children attendance within school can be seen as a central means in which to '*restore a sense of normalcy and hope*' (McBrien, 2005, p.332). Within the school context ASR children may experience, perhaps for the first time within the UK, a sense of consistency and emotional support (German and Ehntholt, 2007) that can help to

support the personal and cultural bereavement that some ASR children may be experiencing (Eisenbruch, 1991).

1.2 Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children in Education

1.2.1 Conceptualising Needs

Local authorities and schools within the UK conceptualise the needs of ASR pupils through different models and approaches (Rutter, 2006; Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Broadly these models are outlined in **Figure 1**.

Fig.1 Local authority conceptual approaches to supporting ASR pupils

1. Adopting an 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) approach.
2. Based around the concept of ethnic minority underachievement.
3. Positioning ASR pupils as having Special Educational Needs (SEN); for example as pupils' with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), vulnerable children, at risk and requiring extensive support and guidance.
4. New arrivals (admissions and induction emphasis).
5. Race equality based around equal opportunities. For example teachers, parents and children involved in drafting school policy and action plans (Manyena and Brady, 2007)
6. Holistic approaches which emphasise for example, the development of ecological resilience through the provision of support services and the creation of a positive can-do attitude towards the child, rather than a deficit model (Paton et al. 2000)

None of the conceptual approaches outlined above is exclusive, with LAs and individual schools adopting several approaches or models simultaneously. In light of this perhaps the most constructive and psychological approach for school to adopt in supporting the needs of ASR pupils would be the compassionate model of social inclusion, based on the holistic approach (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). Holistic approaches (Colley, 2003) seek to focus upon the academic achievement of ASR pupils alongside interventions to support the child's well-being and their emotional, personal and social development (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). LAs and schools working holistically tend to value cultural diversity and actively promote and value the presence of ASR pupils within school. This kind of approach aims to create a positive image of ASR pupils where discourses which view ASR as problematic are resisted (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).

1.2.2 Vulnerability Discourses

The holistic model proposed above is rooted in the belief, arising pre-dominantly from psychological research, that ASR children can be highly vulnerable and that their experiences in the UK may exacerbate this (Rutter, 2003). ASR children are at increased risk of psychiatric difficulties (Rousseau, 1995) and around 40% of young refugees may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression or other anxiety-related difficulties (Hodes, 2000). These difficulties are often compounded by, for example, economic hardship and poor spoken English skills (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are perhaps amongst the most vulnerable to enter education in the UK (Morris, 2003). Not only faced with isolation from their original culture and community, as well as being separated from their families, they also face the challenge of acclimatising to a new culture, new language and new education system. Unaccompanied children may also be particularly vulnerable to risk of harm through child trafficking, indeed within the LA in which this research was conducted, a significant number of children may have been trafficked (EPCAT, 2007), children that are often hidden through private fostering arrangements. There is also a group of children known to be invisible in that they are not registered with health or education services, although data on this group is for obvious reasons difficult to obtain (EPCAT, 2007).

There is an awareness of the impact of trauma on ASR children (Hart, 2009), and how this can significantly impact on their ability to learn and take part in 'normal' school life. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of trauma is vital so that professionals know how to respond (Lengua et al., 2006), and is discussed in detail by Rutter (2006) and Hodes (2000). A central theme however to emerge from this literature concerns the importance of teachers as 'front line' workers in working with traumatised individuals who may require extensive support (Refugee Council, 2000 in Rutter, 2003).

Entering the education system can also be a significant source of stress as ASR pupils, particularly those with EAL, not only have to adjust to the culture of the school, but have to complete school work and develop relationships with peers and

adults (Fumoto et al., 2007). However whilst many ASR children and young people will have previously experienced traumatic events, and will perhaps continue to do so, many are highly resilient individuals who have the capability to overcome crisis whilst maintaining positive psychological functioning. Often resilient ASR pupils have strong and well-protected adaptation systems (McEwan, 2007) that have meant they can cope with difficult prior life experiences and assimilate challenging new experiences. Many ASR children, despite their often difficult backgrounds, may have a collective resilience through being part of a wider community and the cultural identity that can go along with this. Rutter (2006) notes that the vulnerability of ASR pupils, and trauma discourses, are often highlighted by psychological research and this may well influence the perceptions of practitioners' working alongside them. For example teachers' may consider ASR children to be fragile which creates and perpetuates a victim discourse regarding ASR. Rutter (2006) also notes that not all ASR children are vulnerable or traumatised and as practitioners we should not propagate constructions of ASR pupils as weak and vulnerable when each individual child, and their particular circumstance, will be unique. It is also important that individualising psychological discourses should not be used to construct ASR children as a problem within education (Boyden and Berry, 2004).

1.2.3 Educational Rights

The educational rights of ASR children have only recently become a topical issue due to their significant presence within schools in the UK (Manyena and Brady, 2007). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that all children

have the right to education, and that ASR children are a distinctive group entitled to specific consideration (Hart, 2009). Local authorities have a legal duty to ensure that education is available to all children of compulsory school age in their area, appropriate to age, abilities and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. This duty applies irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence in a particular location and therefore includes children from ASR backgrounds (UNESCO, 2010).

Despite this ASR pupils remain a largely invisible group within the wider education system due to the lack of specific legislation regarding their presence (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). Amongst the many forms of social exclusion ASR children are likely to experience, such as material poverty, poor housing and discrimination, restricted and inconsistent access to education is likely to be a reality (Beirens et al., 2007). Furthermore the education system may be unfairly biased against vulnerable groups such as ASR pupils and their right to education can be consistently violated (Anderson et al., 2008). Indeed ASR and traveller children may be the most discriminated against groups within the school system (Children's Society, 2006). In a robust critique of Government policy the Children's Legal Centre (Anderson et al., 2008), an independent organisation concerned with children's' rights under law, states that:-

"Many refugee and asylum-seeking children experience unacceptable delays in gaining access to education; many are placed in schools unable to meet their needs; and for many of these children, access to the full curriculum is restricted due to financial obstacles. In addition, a lack of specificity in funding arrangements mean that refugee and asylum-seeking children will not always receive important financial support they require to access education".(p.4)

The authors go on to argue that:-

"Local authorities should be under an obligation to provide (community-based) education to asylum seeking children, and that the statutory guarantee to education should apply to all asylum seeking children" (p.4)

The report reinforces the need for a sensitive and responsive education system that meets the needs of ASR children. ASR families often place a high value on education yet express concerns that the inflexibility of the education system restricts their children's access to education (Manyena and Brady, 2007). However providing education for ASR pupils can cause difficulties for LAs given funding formulas and the uncertainties surrounding individual children's futures within the UK, coupled with issues around high mobility (Arnot et al., 2009).

ASR pupils face many issues within school systems such as underachievement, bullying and inadequate SEN provision (Rutter, 2003) and the need for structural change within schools should be supported by substantive and meaningful legislative changes. These challenges however should not prevent those concerned with improving education focussing on how we can better meet ASR pupil's needs. Indeed given these concerns education professionals should be conscious to champion their needs at every opportunity.

1.2.4 Educational Interventions

Within the conceptual approaches outlined previously (see **Figure 1**), a variety of evidence-based support mechanisms and interventions have been identified to effectively support the entry of ASR pupils into the education system. Based on Doyle and McCorriston (2008) **Figure 2** shows the effective measures known to support the inclusion of ASR pupils within the education context.

Fig.2   Factors known to support the inclusion of ASR pupils in the UK

- Mainstream and specialist provision to support those pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Whilst mainstreaming may have more benefits for ASR pupils than isolation (Candappa, 2007) it is important that they receive, or have access to, specialist support on a regular basis where prior skills and knowledge of working alongside EAL can be utilised (Rutter, 2003). Furthermore ASR pupils should have the chance to maintain and develop their home language (Rutter, 2003). In addition it is vital that accurate assessment of ASR pupils needs is conducted and this can often be an issue in schools (Manyena and Brady, 2007).

- Extended schools. Extra-curricular clubs can be crucial to the education and inclusion of ASR pupils into school and the wider community (Smyth, 2006).

- Good home/school links. Poor home/school communication may often be a barrier to the development of positive relationships; in particular where ASR parents feel they cannot approach schools (Manyena and Brady, 2007). Nurturing school environments are often the result of sustained community/school partnerships (Doyle and McCorriston, 2008).

- Peer mentors. Alongside this an identified member of staff in the school who has responsibility for refugee children and access to information about refugee children can be invaluable for pupils and staff alike (Rutter, 2003).

- Good relations with support agencies to provide psycho-social support for refugee children who are not coping as a result of their past and present experiences (Rutter, 2003).

- Tailored inductions that foster a sense of social inclusion (Arnot and Pinson, 2010). Ofsted (2003) recommend that schools should have plans in place prior to the pupil's arrival in school and that ASR pupils should be made to feel welcome (Rutter, 2003). Furthermore difficulties in transition between primary and secondary have been identified (Manyena and Brady, 2007), mainly due to the fact that primary schools tend to be more accommodating and welcoming than secondary schools.

- In-service training on meeting the needs of ASR pupils is essential (Rutter, 2003). Indeed compulsory training in schools should sensitise staff to the experiences of ASR pupils and reduce negative stereotyping and the low expectations some staff may have about children (Anderson et al., 2008).

- Action should be taken to counter hostility and the racist bullying of refugees. This may comprise links with other organisations such as Race Equality Councils and community groups. School also need effective sanctions against racist bullying and to use the curriculum to promote ethnic diversity as positive (Rutter, 2003).

- There is a need for a highly developed support system for ASR pupils within schools with good systems of data collection and ongoing inclusive and collaborative policy development (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).

Figure 3 shows additional recommendations for local authorities.

Fig.3 <u>Recommendations for Local Authority on how best to promote the inclusion of</u>
<u>ASR pupils</u>

- Targeted ring-fenced funding for ASR pupils. Central government emphasis is on LA responsibility for ASR children and although funding is available through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) and the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG), neither is designed to meet the often complex needs of ASR pupils (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). EMAG funding for example is once yearly and is relatively inflexible;
- Guidelines should be in place to support the transition of ASR children into community settings under the dispersal policy, ensuring they are placed in areas with suitable educational provision;
- Data should be maintained to monitor outcomes for ASR children;
- Local authorities should be given timelines for making educational placements for refugee and asylum seeking children. For example the arrival of ASR pupils in school mid-term are common, and it often takes weeks/months to find a placement for them (Appa, 2005).

(Anderson et al., 2008)

There is significant guidance regarding what LAs and individual schools should be doing to support ASR pupils. However Anderson et al. (2008) highlight a potential gap between rhetoric and reality, and the fact that some LAs and schools may not, as yet, be cognisant of the evidence base outlined above.

The most recent specific review of schools' performance in relation to meeting the needs of ASR pupils was conducted by Ofsted (2003). Overall the report suggested

that provision was rated good for asylum seeking children, which is at odds with the more recent report by Anderson et al. (2008) previously discussed. However it does give schools and individual teachers praise for their efforts and notes that some schools have to commit significant time and resources on integrating ASR pupils. The report highlights the use of EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) staff to support ASR pupils in schools, however during consultation with staff in the LA in which this research was conducted (November 2009) it emerged that funding for the Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (funded by EMAG) was cut in 2010. The report identified a number of schools where class teachers were struggling to meet the learning needs of ASR pupils and a lack of school training in identifying psychological trauma and basic knowledge about linguistic, cultural and educational experiences of ASR children was highlighted.

The emerging literature on the education of ASR children outlined above contrasts with common discourses within society which often de-personalise and politicise ASR experiences by focussing upon the impact of asylum on education (Reakes, 2007). The growing evidence-base regarding how best to support the needs of ASR children in schools, and good practice for professionals more generally, is also set against the often interrupted nature of the educational experiences and difficult life circumstances in the country of origin ASR children may have experienced, which mean providing the right kind of educational environment can be difficult (Rutter, 2003). Despite this the majority of ASR pupils integrate well into school and make a positive contribution (Blackwell and Melzack, 2000). However more can and should be done to improve the attainments and achievements of ASR pupils.

1.2.5 Educational Outcomes

Given the lack of data regarding ASR pupils LAs tend to hold it is unsurprising that educational outcomes for this group are poorly recorded (Anderson et al. 2008). There are a wide variety of central and local governmental initiatives to improve the academic achievement of ASR pupils however good practice remains patchy (Watters, 2008). The presence of ASR pupils within schools may be viewed within some school contexts as a threat to standards, although ASR pupils are only included in league table data following two years of residency within the UK (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

There are elements of the ASR population who underachieve (Rutter, 2003) but the pattern is uneven and complex. Manyena and Brady (2007) note that ASR community members within their study felt their children did relatively well in school given their difficult starting points, although Sriskandarajah et al. (2007) observed that different groups of ASR pupils may do better than others. For example ASR children, such as those from a Somalian background, were observed to do less well academically than other African children, operating around 22% below the mean score for those considered to be indigenous English children. However the authors do concede that the pattern may not be universal across all schools and there is consensus that, in general, with suitable and appropriate intervention, barriers to learning and achievement can be overcome (Watters, 2008). ASR children tend to progress better in primary schools, where most make good progress, particularly in Mathematics (Ofsted, 2003).

1.3 Teachers' Experiences

The arrival of ASR pupils within school is often viewed positively by teachers' (Whiteman, 2009) as many are seen as having much to offer within the school context, although teachers' themselves may doubt their ability to meet the child's needs (Pinson and Arnot, 2007). Individual teachers play a central role in supporting ASR pupils, yet their presence may have a significant psychological impact upon those teachers' (Arnot et al., 2009). In their research Arnot et al. (2009) focus upon discourses which place ASR children as victims and discuss the humanism of teachers' and the role compassion plays within their day-to-day practice as part of their professional identity. Placing this within a framework of moral justice the authors discuss teachers' response to ASR pupils in a context of benevolence and sympathy, in contrast to government immigration policy and the role of politics with, and in relation to, education (Arnot et al., 2009). Teachers' are seen to develop emotional attachments to individual pupils, leading them to become passionate advocates for the child and their family, indeed the researchers note that some teachers' may become overly involved in the life of 'vulnerable pupils' where they feel injustice may have occurred (Arnot et al., 2009).

Arnot et al's. (2009) argument is highly political and typically anti-establishment and holds teachers in high-esteem. Although teachers face difficulties in integrating ASR children within school against the backdrop of anti-ASR feeling often seemingly prevalent within the UK (Boyden, 2009), in my opinion making generalised assumptions regarding the compassion of teachers' is unwise given the complexity of

feelings teachers' are likely to experience in working within classrooms. The presence of ASR children can induce a wide variety of contradictory emotions, ranging from anger, frustration, sadness and confusion (Children's Society, 2006). Teachers' may be professionally challenged by the presence of ASR children within the classroom, a vital factor because for many teachers' their relationship with their pupils is often central to their motivation and commitment to the job (Day et al., 2006).

Furthermore school staff themselves may often be experiencing significant psychological distress within the school context, with increasing expectations placed on their role, particularly in relation to the narrow focus on academic achievement (NASUWT, 2010), and the presence of ASR children alongside other pupils with often specific needs may further compound this. In addition westernised discourses of child development may lead some professionals to question the resilience of ASR pupils and doubt their ability to cope within school (Bash, 2005), alongside a sense that they themselves as professionals may lack the skills to work with, what they may consider to be, traumatised ASR children (German and Ehntholt, 2007). This highly negative view is exemplified within research by Blackwell and Melzack (2000) which highlights the view that teachers' working alongside ASR pupils have to manage their own feelings and adopt a realistic perspective about the difficulties the child faces, as a starting point for living with the 'child's unhappiness'.

Linked to this negative discourse regarding ASR children is research which has suggested that teachers' may, in some circumstances, hold a deficit assumption

about the academic ability of the ASR children with which they work (Devine, 2005). This can be reinforced by a lack of understanding regarding the refugee experience in schools and the overwhelming stress of immigration status. This lack of understanding on the part of teachers' can lead to low expectations regarding pupil ability (Candappa, 2007; Children's Society, 2006b). Research has also highlighted that some ASR children believe they suffered within school as a result of the racist views held by some teachers' (Hek, 2005b). However this view is somewhat contradicted by the view that ASR pupils can be seen by teachers' as role model students or high achievers (Pinson and Arnot, 2007).

The views of teachers' regarding ASR are often based on their own personal values and norms and may lead them to form a perception of others through a process of characterisation (Abbas, 2002), which can be either positively or negatively skewed. This is particularly important as the way in which teachers' perceive and interact with pupils is central to the success of the education process. The inconsistency in the research highlights the importance of local and national contexts for teachers and the way in which the presence of ASR pupils is supported and conceptualised within individual schools.

Many school staff have a poor level of awareness of the needs of ASR pupils and their families (Beirens et al., 2007), and this can be compounded by a lack of experienced teachers in the field (Reakes, 2007). Indeed there is an apparent inadequacy within the initial teaching training programme in relation to ASR children, where trainee teachers' may, at best, gain an awareness of ASR pupils needs rather

than any practical competence (Butcher et al., 2007). The inadequacy of the training may lead, for example, to bi-lingualism being seen as a problem by inexperienced teaching staff and may, in extremis, lead to teachers favouring children who are better able to communicate with them (Fumoto et al., 2007).

A school's ability to include ASR pupils reflects its general ability to welcome all pupils (Ofsted, 2003). However the arrival of ASR pupils may create specific difficulties for teachers who are faced with pupils for whom they have no prior information or knowledge regarding previous schooling, and ASR pupils who have little knowledge of the school system (Appa, 2005). Teachers are given the 'flexibility' to adapt and shape the school curriculum to meet the needs of ASR pupils (Ofsted, 2003), which unfortunately can construed as either freedom or lack of guidance. Often they may require help and support to create lessons that are inclusive as they have little time to research appropriate methods due to other school pressures (Children's Society, 2006b). Curriculum pressures are compounded by concerns over the accurate assessment of ASR pupil's academic ability (Rutter, 2001) and modifying the curriculum for ASR children can be hard for teachers already working hard to meet the needs of other pupils within the classroom (Children's Society, 2006b). Further pressure is placed upon teachers as they are expected to promote protective factors that support the emotional well-being of ASR children (DfES, 2004). As a result teachers need consistent support from the wider school, community, parents and external professionals (Beirens et al., 2007).

Schools are not neutral venues; indeed they are highly complex systems and political contexts, where power relationships and dynamics between staff may make it even more difficult for ASR children to settle (Bash, 2005). For example teachers need to maintain excellent communication with other adults within the school environment to ensure supportive provision for ASR pupils (DCSF, 2007b) and within certain school contexts this could be difficult.

Many schools may experience increasing racial tensions and are often at the forefront of these tensions within the wider community (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). The role of education in supporting social cohesion within society and localities is crucial as regular positive contact between pupils from different backgrounds may help to promote inter-group relations and promote the social inclusion of ASR children (Turner and Crisp, 2010). The concept of the 'contact hypothesis' (Verkuyten, 2005; Finney, 2005) can however work conversely in that contact may reinforce and intensify negative attitudes when the quality of contact is inappropriately managed (Van Dick et al., 2004). Accordingly teachers' awareness of, and response to, bullying and racism within school will have a significant impact on the inclusion of an ASR child within that context (NALDIC, 2005). This means individual teachers play a central role in the development of an inclusive environment that is supportive of the needs of all.

1.4 Educational Psychology

To many people educational psychology remains a "*rather mysterious profession*" (Frederickson et al., 2008, p.1) and this is reflected in the relative absence of the profession within the academic and professional literature surrounding ASR pupils (Pinson et al. 2010; Boyden, 2009). Local authorities are expected to provide psychological support for refugees within school (Ofsted, 2003), and educational psychology teams should have staff with designated responsibility for ASR (DfES, 2004). ASRs however are often perceived as a challenging group that are difficult for psychologists to work alongside (Tribe and Patel, 2007). Despite this the relative invisibility of educational psychology is surprising given the discourses surrounding individual ASR pupils and their 'psychological vulnerability', where a clear role for the psychological knowledge, interests and skill-base of many EPs could probably be well-utilised. In reality there is a clear need for the development of the skill base of staff working with ASR pupils (DfES, 2004) and EPs may well view the 'skilling up' of teachers as central to their role (Hulusi, 2009).

Although one-off training for teachers in relation to ASR pupils is useful it is no substitute for ongoing support and training (NALDIC, 2005), and EPs need to help school staff build the knowledge base and capacity within schools in a sustained and structured way (Beirens et al., 2007), as short-term projects rarely have a lasting impact (Children's Society, 2006). Within my own local authority EPs have raised the emotional needs of ASR children at the whole school level (German and Ehntholt, 2007), as part of an intervention to support newly arrived pupils more generally, by

developing a training resource for school staff to help them better manage and support the increasing numbers of ASR pupils entering schools, and to help build the resilience of those pupils (Hulusi, 2009). The resource is an evidence-based approach utilising the current literature regarding what works in facilitating the inclusion of ASR pupils within school settings. The training has not yet been fully evaluated for long-term impact but represents an innovative and pro-active approach to intervention.

The sharing of psychological knowledge should aid the professional development of staff and their perceptions of ASR pupils, with a view to improving outcomes. However the diversity in our schools does place unique additional pressures on teachers' and as 'external' professionals we may, at times, fail to fully appreciate the additional pressures individual teachers' are experiencing. Furthermore in-service training may be regarded with scepticism by staff that are overstretched (Children's Society, 2006). Psychologists also need to be aware of ethnocentrism as the profession is based on accepted western ideology (Tribe and Patel, 2007) and may not reflect the constructions of other cultures (Webster and Robertson, 2007). This may reflect wider concerns regarding the utility of psychological approaches (whether school-based, group or individual) when the social, legal and practical needs of the child may not have been met.

Overall there is much that psychologists, both clinical and educational, have to offer ASR pupils, schools and families (German and Ehntholt, 2007). However external support agencies, such as educational psychology services, should not be seen as a

cure all (Blackwell and Melzack, 2000), as the experiences of ASR children within the UK may be more detrimental to their mental health than their experiences prior to arrival in the UK (Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg, 1998). Given this context, and despite some promising work to date, there is much that EPs could do in terms of raising ASR pupils in the educational context, supporting their needs and facilitating their genuine inclusion. In my opinion there is a need to develop the professions understanding of ASR childrens' experiences in schools based on feedback from those who work directly alongside them.

1.5 Rationale

George Kelly noted that "*if you want to know what is going on, it is always sensible to ask the people who are doing the work themselves*" (Kelly, 1955, in Reid 2006, p.2)*.* It is clear that research in education should be concerned with taking account of the practitioners' perspective (National Teacher Research Panel, 2007)*,* and there is much to be gained from the study of teachers' perceptions of ASR children (Rutter, 2006). Given that there is a substantial academic history of gathering teachers' views and perceptions (Bash, 2005), it is somewhat surprising that there is, at present, a limited literature in respect to teachers' response to the presence of ASR pupils within their classroom (Arnot et al., 2009; Children's Society, 2006; Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Although the 'difficulties' posed for schools are often identified (Pinson and Arnot, 2010; Whiteman, 2005), very little research with the individuals within those schools who have direct contact with ASR pupils appears to have been conducted. In mitigation there previously appears to have been an understandable

emphasis on gaining the views and experiences of ASR children, however many ASR pupils may now feel over-consulted and frustrated that their views never appear to change anything (Children's Society, 2006).

An old Nigerian proverb "*ora na azu nwa",* loosely translated as *"it takes a village to raise a child"* (Hron, 2008)*,* draws attention to the fact that the process of development and maturation for children is facilitated by many people who exert different, but equally valuable, influences upon the child. Teachers can be seen as a central part of this community around the child and I feel there is much to learn from their experiences. As a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) working alongside teaching staff I am interested in developing my own practice and understanding so that I can better support them through consultation, training and intervention.

1.6 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are linked to the methodological approach adopted (Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis) which is discussed in Chapter Two. In keeping with the methodological approach the primary focus is to examine the way in which teachers' perceive and conceptualise the presence of Asylum Seeker and Refugee (ASR) pupils in school. Within this I will focus on the perceptions of the teachers' in relation to the wider ASR pupil group and their perceptions of some of the individual ASR children they have worked with. I will also focus on classroom issues related to the inclusion of ASR pupils and the perceived impact on teachers' professional practice. I also hope to explore their perceptions regarding the presence

of ASR pupils in relation to the wider school systems and the wider community contexts within which those schools are situated.

CHAPTER TWO

<u>METHODOLOGY</u>

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a rationale for the choice of methodology and method adopted for this research project. There are a wealth of methodologies and methods available to the social researcher (Crotty, 1998), and it is essential that a solid theoretical base is built from which to conduct any doctoral study. Methodology underpins an overall research strategy (Silverman, 2000) and the choice of methodology is often influenced by the kind of research questions a study is seeking to address, in a sense the nature of the 'problem' or 'phenomenon' under discussion. I will begin this section by discussing how my own ontological and epistemological stance has informed the choice of research questions and directed the choice of method and mode of analysis. Subsequent to this I will explore the settings and contexts within which the research was conducted and discuss how I sought to address any ethical difficulties. The methodology section will conclude with a consideration of threats to reliability and validity within the study and the central role of reflexivity.

2.2 Methodological Orientation

Within the present study I have chosen to pursue a qualitative framework to inform my choice of methods. This reflects my own epistemological and theoretical orientation regarding the nature of knowledge and what can truly be 'known', and is consistent with the manner in which EPs have turned to qualitative methods over the

last 25 years (Madill, 2002). The emergence of qualitative methods of inquiry within psychology reflects something of an interpretivist turn in research, away from the positivist traditions of psychological research (Coolican, 2004). Furthermore research in education has tended toward adopting qualitative 'post-modern' approaches that focus on the construction of phenomena in real world settings (Scheurich, 1997). Post-modernist thought tends to reject grand narratives and comprehensive explanations of the origins of knowledge, and questions the view that one system of knowledge can ever be dominant over another (Delanty, 1997).

The overall methodological approach adopted within the present study will be discussed in depth but is broadly conceptualised in **Figure 4**.

Fig. 4 <u>An overview of the philosophical foundations underpinning the research study</u>

Constructionism (Ontology)

↓

Interpretivism (Epistemology)

↓

Phenomenology   ←   Hermeneutics   →   Iterative

(Theoretical Perspectives)

↓

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

(Methodology)

↓

Semi-structured Interviews

(Method)
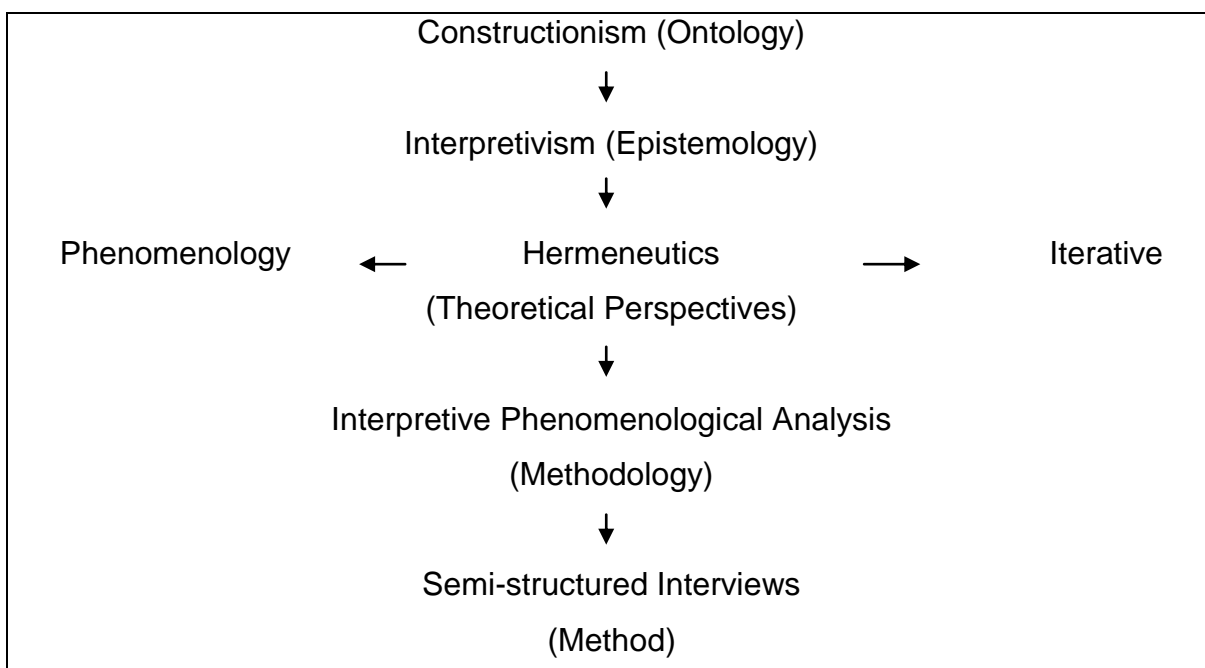
2.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology

The distinction between positivist and interpretivist approaches to research lies in the ontological philosophy each school of thought adheres to. Ontology is concerned with the nature of being, "*to what exists in the world, to the nature of reality*" (Punch, 1998, p.170). Traditionally positivist approaches have sought to adopt an objectivist ontological view of the nature of reality. Within this ontology reality is believed to be independent of human perception and cognition, and has an objective order that is waiting to be uncovered by the researcher (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). A positivist approach to knowledge and understanding of the world suggests that there is a single reality that can be researched through rigorous application of scientific methodology, and assumes that the world is based on common sense perceptions and is real in some definable way (Madill et al., 2000).

In contrast this study is ontologically rooted in constructionism, which prescribes that knowledge, truth and 'reality' can never be truly 'known' because an objective world that can be discovered, measured and quantified does not exist (Pring, 2004). Reality then exists regardless of consciousness, however without consciousness there is no meaning, therefore 'reality' is seen an interaction between the objective and subjective (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly knowledge is conceptualised as a construction of reality from a certain perspective, based on the perceptions of the individual. Within this philosophical framework social phenomena and their meanings can only ever be viewed from an individual's perspective and can never be seen as definitive (Bryman, 2001). Logically constructionist approaches emphasise the discovery of

patterns and meanings over universal truths (Madill et al., 2000) which are co-constructed within interactions in the world, and are influenced by personal, historical and socio-cultural contexts (Gergen, 2001).

Epistemology is philosophically linked to ontology and is concerned with how we know what we know, the theory of knowledge (Davies, 1991) and the methods used in relation to gaining an understanding of social reality (Grix, 2001). The positivist approach has long been applied within the social sciences. This has been particularly true within psychology where researchers have sought scientific credibility, rigour and objectivity in the search for cause and effect relationships (Cohen et al, 2000). In contrast this study rejects an objective epistemological stance in favour of a more relativist and interpretive approach, where *"social* actors *are seen to jointly negotiate the meanings for actions and situations*" (Blaikie, 1993, p.96). Within this epistemology, reality is conceived as highly subjective and interpretivist research accordingly adopts an inductive and theory-generating approach.

It is commonplace within academic research to draw distinctions between positivist and constructionist epistemology but this is a rather simplistic characterisation, when in reality different approaches can be useful in addressing different research questions (Krauss, 2005). Indeed it is perfectly possible that differing aspects of human existence can be best explored by either tradition depending upon the context. Similarly traditional distinctions between qualitative and quantitative methodology can be seen as too simplistic as researchers often borrow heavily from different traditions within their research (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly qualitative

research cannot be seen as a homogenous field as there are a wide variety of methods associated with this kind of research philosophy, and many differing nuanced epistemological positions that researchers may adopt. Indeed Willig (2001) notes that qualitative approaches can be seen to exist on a continuum, ranging from those adopting a realist foundation to those with a distinct and rigid relativist position.

2.2.2 Qualitative Traditions

Broadly qualitative methodologies have developed within phenomenological and social constructionist traditions. Both traditions share a number of similarities including the assumption that 'reality' is not of primary concern, that meaning is preferable to measurement (Krauss, 2005) and that language can help the researcher understand the thoughts and feelings regarding the inner world of the participant (Barker et al., 2002). However social constructionists tend to adopt a more rigid relativist approach which emphasises the role of culture and society in the construction of the self and our mode of relating to one another as human beings (Owen, 1992). Furthermore this position emphasises the importance of language and the social interactions within which language is generated, sustained and abandoned (Gergen and Gergen, 1991). Accordingly beliefs about the world are viewed as social constructions (Owen, 1992) and research seeks to uncover taken for granted discourses, because the language people use to describe their experiences are not necessarily viewed as a reflection of an individual's underlying thoughts and feelings (Barker et al., 2002). Knowledge is therefore conceived of as the property of the group rather than the individual (Kuhn, 1970).

In contrast phenomenological approaches endeavour to study the experiences of individuals to discover a perspective on their life in relation to particular phenomena, to uncover what matters to people within their lived worlds (Smith et al., 2010). Phenomenologists focus upon an individual's thoughts, feelings and perceptions and seek to access the inner life worlds of the participants' to allow an analysis of the multiple perspectives people within the world inevitably hold (Barker et al., 2002). Accordingly the perceptions that an individual holds regarding their life world are viewed as the primary psychological processes underpinning what people think, feel and do (Barker et al., 2002). Phenomenological approaches tend to fall between the 'realist' and 'relativist' ends of the continuum, that is a phenomenological position tends to argue that although experience is always the product of interpretation, and is therefore constructed, it is nevertheless 'real' to the person who is having the experience. Phenomenological traditions grew out of a frustration with traditional 'modern' approaches which drew re-course to a structured view of the universe and world in which we live. For phenomenologists 'truth' can only be seen as an intersubjective perspective heavily influenced by the fluid nature of the social world around us (Finlay, 2005).

Inevitably the phenomenological school of thought forms of a broad spectrum of beliefs and approaches, although all share an interest in understanding what the human experience is like (Smith et al., 2010). In a simplistic sense this spectrum can be characterised by the distinction between approaches which place emphasise upon hermeneutic (interpretation) and idiographic (study of the individual) understanding (Smith et al. 2010), and those stemming from a traditional Husserlian

approach which typically focus upon descriptive accounts of experience (Giorgi, 2008). There has been significant growth in phenomenological research in the past 20 years with many different types of approach adopted including Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Grounded Theory and Ethnography. Although there is much cross-over between approaches (Barker et al., 2002) each offers a distinct method of gaining understanding. The present study adopts IPA as its methodological approach.

2.2.3 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is an inductive and experiential approach to research (Smith, 2004), which attempts to explore how people make sense of their everyday experiences of the reality of their personal and social worlds, in order to understand the meanings they ascribe to those experiences (Smith and Osborn, 2003). From this a comprehensive knowledge of the phenomena under analysis (McLeod, 2001) can be developed from an 'insider's perspective' using an empathetic and questioning approach (Smith et al., 2010). IPA conceptualises the individual as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being, connecting the things people say with their thoughts and emotional responses (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Smith et al. (2010) provide a comprehensive overview of the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, a brief summary of which is provided in **Figure 5**.

Fig.5 <u>Overview of the philosophical basis of IPA based on Smith et al. (2010)</u>

Phenomenology (Reflection, interpretive, perspective of lived experience, person in context. A personal lived experience the result of relationships within the world)	*Husserl*- experience should be examined in the way it occurs, in its own terms. Inward reflection of our perceptions' toward an object moves us beyond taken for granted experiences of the world. The concept of intentionality, experience is always conscious of something. Psychology as phenomenological science. *Heidegger*- people exist in a world of objects. Sense is made through interaction but from the perspective of the individual. Person is always a person in context, we live in relation to others so existence is always temporal and situated *Merleau-Ponty*- an individual exists within the world but as an observer forming perceptions, an individualistic perspective *Sartre*- human engaged in act of development, develops through action and meaning making with the world. Process of becoming rather than being. Experiences contingent to the presence and absence of others
Hermeneutics (theory of interpretation, meaningful insights based on explicit/implicit meaning, the researchers' role in meaning making and making sense of participants' perceptions of phenomenon)	*Schleiermacher*- literal and psychological interpretations (objective/subjective) *Heidegger*- engagement with the world always through interpretation. Objects can appear as they are or have hidden meanings. The search for meaning beyond that which is presented. The centrality of prior experience to the way in which an individual interprets the world. *Gadamer*- pre-conceptions emerge through the interpretive process. *The Hermeneutic Cycle*- dynamic relationship between whole and part, one cannot be observed without knowledge of the other. Non-linear style of thinking. Thus process of IPA is iterative; engagement with data moves forwards and backwards and is shifting and dynamic.

Idiographic (small samples, homogeneity of sample)	• Focus upon the particular emphasising detailed and in depth analysis. Specific to particular individual within particular context, claims about wider population emerge from focus on the particular. Individuals are linked to other people but hold unique perspectives of phenomena

Clearly IPA allows for a flexible approach that draws from across phenomenological traditions, combining aspects of hermeneutics (Barker et al., 2002) with the empirical traditions of empirical phenomenology and its in-depth analysis of single cases to explore the defining features of experience (Smith and Osborn, 2003). IPA also offers a means of accommodating a realist and relativist philosophical position and in so doing adopts a flexible epistemological position that is unusual in qualitative methods in psychology (Ware and Ravel, 2007). For example it is congruent with traditional applied psychological research traditions in acknowledging the existence of a social world independent of human understanding, alongside the recent interpretivist turn in research which emphasises the importance of discourse (Willig, 2001; Madill et al., 2000). IPA can also bridge the essentialist-discursive divide as the text of an individual's perceptions can be analysed both in itself and scrutinised for wider interpretive meaning (Smith et al., 2010). In so doing it allows the researcher to develop research data that is applicable in real world settings that exist outside of an individual's experience, which pure constructionist approaches such as discourse analysis fail to do (Reid et al., 2005).

Research methodology should reflect the way in which a phenomenon is best studied (Krauss, 2005). Given the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research it is appropriate that the theoretical perspectives underpinning the research

should emanate from hermeneutics and phenomenology. I have chosen to pursue a phenomenological approach as I feel an interpretative and idiographic understanding of individual perceptions is the most valid way in which to access and understand teacher's experiences of working with ASR pupils. This has lead to me to reject a social constructionist approach, although I acknowledge that such an approach could well be appropriate as an alternative means of conceptualising teachers' experiences.

2.3 Method

2.3.1 Research Questions

The overarching aim of this research and the choice of research questions reflect the epistemological and theoretical position adopted within this study (Smith et al. 2010). The primary focus of this study is to examine the way in which teachers' perceive the presence of Asylum Seeker and Refugee (ASR) pupils in school. In my view however many subsequent questions or 'areas' for potential exploration emerge from this wider perspective, given the multiplicity of inter-related contexts within schools, from individual within-child factors, classroom dynamics, school systems and structures and their inter-relation to the wider communities within which they serve. Accordingly this multi-level study adopts an ecologically-informed approach (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) to help develop and frame the questions under exploration and lend conceptual coherence. As a consequence the research questions were developed within this framework and were not drawn from the existing literature. This was

deemed to be appropriate given the choice of methodology, the relative lack of existing psychological research in this area and the breadth of exploration the study sought to undertake. The research questions identified by the researcher as a basis for the study were (see **Figure 6**);

Fig. 6 <u>Research questions</u>

- What are the teachers' perceptions of the individual ASR children they have worked with?
- How do teachers' perceive the interactions and relationships ASR children have with others in their classrooms and within the wider school*?*
- What are teachers' views of the inter-connections between the school and community that an ASR child resides within?
- What are the teachers' perceptions of factors which indirectly influence the life of an ASR child within the school context?

2.3.2 Research Context

This research was conducted in three primary schools, within one cluster of geographically linked schools, in a large urban Midlands local authority. The focus on primary school teachers arose because the depth of teacher-pupil interaction is likely to be greater than in secondary schools, where relationships may often not have the time to develop. Furthermore a presumption is made that they will have a more comprehensive knowledge of their pupils within the classroom, the wider school context, with parents and the wider community. The individual cluster of schools was chosen for the study because it lies geographically in the heart of the city and has a large and diverse ethnic population, indeed it is one of the most multi-cultural areas

in the UK. The numbers of ASR people within the area is reported to be high and the number of ASR pupils attending school within the cluster is significantly higher than other areas of the city.

The three individual primary schools were identified from dispersal and new arrivals data sourced from the Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU), who monitor the arrival of ASR children and young people within the area. According to their Ofsted reports the three schools can be classified as medium sized (250 pupils) and are all non-denominational. Pupils attending the school are aged 3-11. All three schools are situated within areas of high economic disadvantage and social deprivation and have populations consisting of people from ethnic backgrounds including Indian, Pakistani, African and Caribbean. Across the three schools the number of pupils classified with English as an Additional Language is between 41-58%. The high mobility of pupils alongside the sizeable minority of pupils who enter the schools during the school year was noted within their individual Ofsted reports. In terms of ASR pupils all three schools have large numbers of Afghani and Somalian children.

2.3.3 Ethics

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist I have a dual role as a research student and practitioner, which means there is increased scrutiny regarding the ethical standards relating to my performance. This was particularly important within the present research context where it was essential that my conduct as a professional

practitioner reflects well on both the academic institution to which I am affiliated, and the employment context to which I am committed.

Within the following sections regarding sample selection and data collection I have embedded a discussion of the ethical issues surrounding the present study, rather than develop a specific ethics discussion. The rationale for this lies in the desire to demonstrate the centrality of ethics within the study and highlight that ethical considerations were an integral and ongoing feature of this research endeavour. I have demonstrated compliance with three codes of practice, namely those of the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009), The Health Professionals Council Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2008) and the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004). Whilst there are differences of emphasis between the codes there are many areas of commonality, not least the recognition that practitioners need to act with respect, competence, responsibility, honesty and integrity and operate in the best interests of those we work alongside (BPS Ethics, 2009; HPC, 2008).

Given the nature of this study, with the emphasis on the professional experiences of adults within school contexts, there were few anticipated difficulties with regard to the ethical review process and the study received ethical approval in a relatively straightforward manner (see **Appendix 1**). However the research study still required careful planning and implementation to comply with the ethical guidelines which govern educational research and psychologists practice more generally (HPC, 2008; BERA, 2004; BPS, 2009). The ethical issues discussed within this study relate to

informed consent, confidentiality, reducing participant stress and harm, the right to withdraw, data usage and reducing power differentials between researcher and participant.

2.3.4 Sample

Within each of the three schools identified, following negotiations with headteachers to discuss the scope and implications of the project, staff teams were approached by the researcher and the underlying rationale for the study discussed and the time commitment their involvement in the project would entail was raised. Based on this discussion each school was asked for three volunteers to come forward to take part in the study, provided they had direct experience of working with ASR pupils within the school context in the last two years. In all seven staff members from across the three schools took part, six in the main study and one in the pilot study. This is a relatively large number for an IPA study (Smith et al., 2010), however I felt it would allow for a wider range of perspectives to be drawn and allow for greater analytical comparisons to be made. The participants in this study were all female and experienced teachers' with upwards of 5 years service. Two were from Senior Leadership Teams who still maintain direct teaching time within their weekly timetables. The seven teachers were from differing ethnic backgrounds and could be broadly classified as White British (3), Caribbean (3) and South Asian (1).

The methods adopted within qualitative research tend to reflect a belief that social phenomena can best be accessed through small scale research designed to gather a

deeper understanding of the issue under consideration (Silverman, 2000). In accordance with the underlying philosophy of IPA the sample was selected purposively in order to gain an insight into the lived experiences of a cohort of teachers', working within a similar geographic area to form a largely homogenous sample (Smith et al. 2010). It is acknowledged however that homogeneity of sample is a complex and difficult issue to resolve. Clearly individual differences mean complete homogeneity can never be guaranteed and indeed would not be entirely desirable. Rather the view within this study concurs with that proposed by Smith et al. (2010, p.49) which states that participants should *"represent a perspective rather than a population".* Given the professional links each participant shares, their experience within their profession and the geographical location of their school contexts the homogeneity of this sample was judged to broadly fulfil the homogeneity principle.

Gaining the informed consent of the participants to take part in the research was essential to both the ethical integrity of the study and to the development of a trusting relationship. Gaining consent should be a clear and transparent process which promotes mutual respect and confidence between participants and researchers (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009). I was guided by the principle that "*voluntary informed consent is the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway" (*BERA, 2004, *p.6).* Informed consent was gained verbally from the Headteachers in the first instance. It was important to emphasise to the participants prior to recruitment (see **Appendix 2**) that the data was to remain confidential and anonymity could be

guaranteed, as research participants' have an entitlement to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2004). No school or individual teacher was referred to within the report and the geographical area was not named. Overall it was made clear to the participants' that their views will not be attributed to them, but will be presented collectively in a research paper (BPS Ethics, 2009). In doing this I hoped to encourage the participants to take part and enter into honest and informative dialogue. Following this each individual participant was asked to sign a consent form stating that they understood the nature of the project (see **Appendix 3**).

Upon completion of the research project a copy of the report will be made available for each of the participant schools (BERA, 2004). In addition it was agreed that feedback for the school would be limited to that which individual teachers felt comfortable in discussing, and this would be negotiated between researcher and the individual participants.

2.3.5 Data Collection

Smith et al. (2010, p.56) note that "*IPA is best suited to a data collection approach which will invite participants to offer a rich, detailed, first person account of their experiences*". Accordingly the present study used in-depth individual semi-structured interviews (Coolican, 2004). The choice of semi-structured interviews permits a degree of structure to an interview where pre-identified issues can be explored and discussed (Denscombe, 1998). Usefully however, and in contrast to largely quantitative approaches such as surveys and structured questionnaires, it provides

the researcher with the flexibility (Robson, 2002) to allow the interview to evolve and develop in interesting and perhaps previously unconsidered ways, encouraging participants to expand upon their answers (Coolican, 2004). This level of informality can be important when conducting research in complex contexts where there are often no simple explanations regarding human thought and action. Each interview was planned to last one hour, which is deemed to be an appropriate length of time for an in-depth interview (Smith et al. 2010). This was negotiated in advance with the Headteachers of the individual schools, in order that the time required could be accommodated within the school timetable.

Eight open-ended questions relating to the research questions under exploration were identified along with associated prompts to further stimulate conversation (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson, 2002). The drafting of an interview schedule (see **Appendix 4**) allows the researcher to prepare for the encounter and set a loose agenda to guide the interview if required. However it was also acknowledged that the interview may proceed organically and a strict set of questions to 'adhere to' needed to be avoided (Smith et al., 2010). Open-ended questions were adopted within the interviews and were designed to prompt in-depth participant responses and allow the interview to proceed in a more naturalistic manner, producing "*richer, more genuine and realistic information on the interviewees own terms*" (Coolican, 2004, p.155). Each interview was tape recorded with the consent of the participants in order that a verbatim account of the interview could be gained for data analysis. In addition hand notes were taken to note particular non-verbal behaviours or topics to return to later in the interview (see **Appendix 5**).

The questions within the schedule were not simply a repetition of the overarching research questions; however they were designed to address those questions. In accordance with the overarching research questions I structured the interview schedule to begin with an exploration of teachers' perceptions of the individual ASR children they have worked alongside, before moving on to wider classroom issues, whole school factors and interactions with the wider ASR community. Smith et al. (2010) recommend the interview begins with a question that encourages the participant to talk at length and in this instance I judged that asking teachers' to discuss their experiences of individual ASR children within their classes would be the best place to begin as it is largely descriptive. I ensured that I was comfortable with my question schedule prior to the interview as this was important in ensuring the participant does not believe that the researcher has a pre-set agenda which might influence the quality or length of their input. It is also important to recognise that semi-structured interviews are a fluid and dynamic process which requires careful handling (Smith et al, 2010) and the interview schedule was a useful way of managing this complexity on occasion.

In order to test my chosen method of data collection I used the first interview I conducted as the pilot study for this research project. This afforded an opportunity to test research questions and practice my interview technique within an IPA framework. I judged that conducting the pilot study in context would be the most useful way in which to proceed in terms of shaping my approach within the interviews to follow. Following the interview I discussed the process with the participant to examine their experience of the interview and identify any changes or refinements

that may need to be made. Based on this discussion, and my own reflections on the process, I judged my interview style and approach was in keeping with the IPA method, and the identified questions were suitable as a basis for discussion within the interviews to follow. However I was mindful to reflect on the process following each interview in order to ensure consistency and suitability of the questions and approach more generally. The data set from the pilot study was not included within the report.

I built trust and rapport with the participants by articulating clear goals, setting clear boundaries and remaining sensitive and empathetic to verbal and non-verbal cues (Cohen et al., 2007) and monitoring for discomfort (Smith et al. 2010). Within an IPA interview framework the relationship between researcher and participant is central to the success of the study and the quality of data that was likely to emerge, as the teachers involved needed to become active participants in the research (Alderson, 2004). The research process should always be considered from the viewpoint of the participant (BPS, 2009) and I was careful to highlight that there are no or wrong answers and that the interview would be an active two-way process (Smith et al., 2010). Each of the participants was given time to develop their answers within the interviews and as the interviewer I was highly engaged in the process, as a curious and active listener (Smith et al., 2010). I was conscious of my role as a TEP and how this might be viewed by the participants'. In certain instances this may have acted to create power differentials between researcher and participant (BPS, 2009). I made a conscious effort to address these potential differentials through the use of humour to reduce tension and potential awkwardness, and to introduce an element of

enjoyment into the process. The process of rapport development was also supported through limited self-disclosure to develop trust and a sense of partnership working.

Prior to the interviews being conducted each individual teacher was briefed regarding what could be expected within the interview, alongside a written summary of the scope of the research which was provided in advance for each participant to peruse (Alderson, 2004) as part of the consent gathering process (see **Appendix 2**). Those teachers involved with the project were provided with the contact details of the researcher so that they could have the opportunity to discuss the research in more detail if desired and in case '*stress, potential harm, or related questions or concern arises despite the precautions*' taken (BPS, paragraph 8.2, 2009). Ultimately a central concern of the study was not to place participants under duress at any point (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004).

The right to withdraw is central to the research enterprise and the participants' sense of self-determination (BPS, 2009), and all "*researchers should recognise the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any reason or no reason, and at any time, and they must inform them of this right*" (BERA, 2004, p.6). In addition there should be no attempt made to coerce or persuade individuals to continue to participate, and offers to withdraw should be accepted without question (BERA, 2004). The right to withdraw was made clear to each participant via the consent letter (see **Appendix 2**) and a subsequent reminder prior to the interview commencing.

In addition participants were informed from the outset of the protocol for the use of the data gained from the interviews should they have decided to withdraw at any point. The data was not stored against individual names so participants could not withdraw their data after participation, although withdrawal prior to data collection, during the discussion or immediately after the discussion would mean their individual contribution would not be included in the research. In addition to this following each interview I conducted a de-brief session with the participants (BPS, 2009), which gave the participants' time to reflect on the process and remove any material they may feel uncomfortable about donating, a process which fits well within the IPA approach (Smith et al. 2010). The data elicited from the research interviews was, with the permission of the participants' (BPS, 2009), collected using audio recording and hand written notes and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Further efforts to respect the confidentiality of the participants' were made (HPC, 2008). For example the research interview was conducted in private and with no interruptions, in a room that was not accessible to any other persons. It was also important to highlight to participants the responsibility I held regarding their welfare and the obligation placed upon me to ensure appropriate steps are taken to support any psychological or physical problems of which a participant is, apparently, unaware but which may emerge during the research process (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009). In this instance a protocol was agreed whereby it would be raised during the debrief session between participant and researcher at the end of the data collection session and any resultant action steps that need to be taken would be identified. Similarly it was vital to re-affirm prior to the interviews taking place that confidentiality could not

be assured if, during the course of the interview, an issue comes to light that places either themselves or another individual at risk of harm or any indication of illegal activity is disclosed (BERA, 2004).

Following the completion of the interviews each school was thanked for their participation verbally and via written correspondence (see **Appendix 6**).

2.3.6 Data Analysis

IPA provides "*a systematic and practical approach to analysing phenomenological data*" (Barker et al., 2002, p.81) and is the search for distinctive voices, shared themes and an analysis of variations on themes (Smith et al., 2010). It has been embraced by psychological researchers as it also provides a clear method with accessible procedures (Barker et al., 2002), and a highly structured approach to qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although IPA has been criticised by advocates of thematic analysis who consider it to be relatively inflexible and overly structured (Braun and Clarke, 2006) it is, I believe, useful to have a structured approach that it is replicable as it introduces a level of accountability into the analysis and can counter the perception that at times, approaches such as thematic analysis, attempt to be all encompassing and lose a degree of credibility as a result. There are a wide range of approaches within IPA from the descriptive to the interpretive, from the *particular to the shared* (Smith et al., 2010, p. 79). Given this potential complexity I have adopted within this study the step-by-step analytical process described by Smith et al. (2010, p.82) which is summarised in **Figure 7**.

Fig.7 <u>Overview of the analysis process based upon model from Smith et al. (2010)</u>

Step 1 - Transcription	Verbatim transcription of the semantic content of each individual interview based on audio recording (see **Appendix 7**)
Step 2 - Reading and Re-reading	Immersion in the data, active engagement with the data, searching for richer, detailed sections. Searching for contradictions and paradoxes. Spotting shifts from generic to specific in accounts and patterns.
Step 3 - Initial Noting	Detailed and time consuming, examine semantic content and language. Noting anything of interest. Identify specific ways participant talks about an issue. An unstructured commentary. Describe what matters to participant and the meaning of those things. Note language used and context. *Descriptive* comments (content of what participant has said), *linguistic* comments (specific use of language by participant) and *conceptual* comments (interrogative level and interpretive). Identifying text you consider important or noting free associations formed from reading text (see **Appendices 7 and 8**)
Step 4 - Developing Emergent Themes	Based on *Step 3.* Reducing volume of data but capturing complexity. Mapping interrelationships, connections and patterns. Fragmenting transcript to chunk themes. Need to be grounded in data as well as conceptual (see **Appendices 8 and 9**)
Step 5 - Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes	Mapping how the themes appear to fit together and related to research questions. Remove themes from chronological order they appeared in the text, group together. *Abstraction* (developing superordinate themes), *subsumption* (emergent theme becomes superordinate theme), *polarisation* (identifying oppositional themes), *contextualisation* (relate themes to life events), *numeration* (identification of how often a theme is discussed), *function* (what function are the themes serving for the individual). Bringing it together- how did researcher go about compiling this

	section? Produce a graphic representation of themes (see **Appendices 9 and 10**)
Step 6 - Moving to the Next Case	Move to next case; try to set aside (bracket) assumptions and knowledge of previous text.
Step 7 - Looking for Patterns Across Cases	Connections between/across interviews, graphic representation of most potent/consistent themes, identify individual and shared meanings. Ensure analysis maintains a strong interpretive focus (see **Appendix 10**).

2.4 Validity and Reliability

2.4.1 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Studies

The process of data collection and analysis outlined previously in this chapter requires a consideration of how issues surrounding validity and reliability influence qualitative studies. The concepts of validity and reliability are rooted in positivist and scientific traditions within the natural and human sciences. However the terms require some re-definition within qualitative approaches because the researchers are interpretively immersed in the research process, rather than attempting to objectively and neutrally observe a phenomenon (Golafshani, 2003). Golafshani (2003) believes that redefining reliability in qualitative studies means adopting different language to describe it and can be best understood in terms of a study's credibility, confirmability, consistency, dependability, applicability and transferability. In contrast Ratcliff (1995) challenges this view by arguing the context dependent and particular nature of qualitative research means that reliability in any given study can never be assured. Clearly attaining this level of clarity and reliability is difficult within qualitative

approaches however Ratcliff (1995) reports that reliability within qualitative research can be strengthened by multiple listenings of audio recordings to ensure transcription is accurate and to develop a closer relationship with the data. Reliability may be further strengthened by a clear research process, with examples of raw data and how data analysis was conducted.

Ensuring validity in qualitative approaches can also be challenging (Smith et al., 2010), indeed from a constructionist perspective beliefs regarding the nature of validity may be dependent upon an individual's interpretation of validity within that particular context (Golafshani, 2003). Validity cannot be addressed prior to conducting the research due to the inductive and uncertain nature of the process. Indeed within qualitative studies researcher effects and bias are well acknowledged and become part of the study itself. As a consequence the concept of validity within qualitative studies cannot be seen as fixed but is dependent on how the research process itself unfolds (Golafshani, 2003). A qualitative approach may be considered valid if it retains a level of integrity and quality and is an accurate and truthful account of an individual's experience (Coolican, 2004). Furthermore validity can be demonstrated by the degree to which the findings have been interpreted fairly and consistently and whether another researcher could, following further analysis, reach the same or similar conclusions (Coolican, 2004). This can be linked to the overall defensible trustworthiness of any given qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003). Ratcliff (1995) identifies a number of key factors in ensuring validity in qualitative research including the use of raw data including word for word transcripts (descriptive validity), the co-checking of data and interpretations and checking with those the research was

conducted with (interpretive validity), considering findings in relation to existing literature as part of a process of triangulation and theory generation (theoretical validity) and a record of how the research process has influenced the perceptions of the researcher.

2.4.2 Validity, Reliability and IPA

Issues surrounding validity and reliability are central to IPA (Smith et al., 2010) and many of the measures outlined above are adhered to within the approach. Within any interpretive study there will be concerns regarding the double hermeneutic, that is the researcher is seeking to interpret the participants' interpretation of a given phenomenon. This can leave scope for misinterpretation and introduces a level of uncertainty with regard to the validity of any given qualitative study. IPA recognises that the research context is a dynamic process where the researcher plays a central role (Smith and Osborn, 2007), so sensitivity to context and the development of rapport between researcher and participant is crucial to its success. IPA also acknowledges that data interpretation can highly subjective and interpretations need to be well-evidenced and grounded in raw data.

IPA attempts to ensure reliability and validity through largely standardised data collection procedures, through thorough documenting and transcription and interpretation and establishing inter-rater reliability to ensure the transparency and coherence of the study (Smith et al., 2010). Within the present study the process of triangulation to control for inherent bias within the research (Golafshani, 2003), and

ensure valid themes, was addressed through the involvement of a peer researcher to analyse one data set. However the degree to which this process can be said to ensure reliability and validity is at best doubtful given the inductive nature of the research process and the level of immersion within the text a new researcher is likely to have. Consequently following the analysis phase the six participants were consulted to discuss my interpretations.

Smith et al. (2010) also identify the commitment and rigour of the researcher as a central factor in ensuring the validity of a study, which is the level of effort committed to data collection and analysis, attention to detail with sampling, the interview process and the depth of analysis. Indeed the researcher can be regarded as the instrument employed and therefore credibility can only be assured through a demonstration of the effort and ability of the researcher (Patton, 2002). Overall the validity of any research enterprise will be judged upon what it tells us and its impact more generally.

2.4.3 Reflexivity

Within qualitative research approaches such as IPA particular attention is paid to threats to validity and reliability arising from the researcher themselves as they are immersed in the whole research process (Golafshani, 2003). Accordingly there is a need for an ongoing process of reflexivity by the researcher throughout the research regarding their subjective experiences (Coolican, 2004) and this forms a crucial part of the iterative process of data collection, analysis and reflection. IPA tends to reject

the traditional approach of bracketing within phenomenological approaches where the researcher seeks to set aside prior expectations and assumptions (Barker et al., 2002). Rather there is an emphasis on critical self-awareness and the way in which the researcher's own values, experiences, interests, assumptions and preconceptions are likely to influence the collection and interpretation of qualitative data, and to recognise the impossibility of maintaining an objective stance to the subject matter (Willig, 2001). As such reflexivity is an assessment of the potential biases within the research process and is a way of trying to mitigate for the criticisms of positivist adherents who value an objective and scientifically informed research process with an observer neutrally uncovering observable and natural facts (Coolican, 2004). Qualitative researchers tend to reject the idea that a researcher can apply natural science method to study human action and the recognition of reflexivity within the research process is one way in which to strengthen validity within a qualitative study. As a researcher it is also important to maintain an ongoing reflection within the study on your own learning within the process and how this may have influenced the analysis and interpretation of data.

2.4.4 Researcher's Position

As noted previously this study is largely sympathetic towards ASR people and I personally believe that 'western' nations have a responsibility, and some level of obligation, towards others in the world that require help and support in order to live their lives with the same kind of freedom that we broadly experience. From a personal perspective I share the concerns of some sections of the population

regarding the increasing numbers of ASR people entering the country. However I also recognise that these people are often highly vulnerable and believe that a hallmark of a civilised society should be its ability to look after the vulnerable. I have had the opportunity to travel and have gained a deep sense of understanding about our privilege in the UK.

As a TEP I have become increasingly aware that the presence of ASR children within schools creates many opportunities and some problems for teachers. In many other respects however I have approached this research topic from a relatively uninformed starting point in terms of the experiences of ASR children within school and the impact this has on their teachers. I have not subsequently had any direct contact with ASR children but have spoken to teachers regarding their feelings about those children they have worked with. Many have expressed frustration about their ability to meet the child's needs and a sense that something is wrong with the 'system'. I expect there may be a degree of negativity about ASR children and lots of anecdotes about individual children. I expect some suspicion from the teachers concerned about my role and I doubt whether I will be able to access their inner life world in relation to ASR children. I acknowledge that I will play a central role in this research, that I am very much part of the interview transaction that will occur, and that my presence and contribution to that process will undoubtedly influence the perceptions that the teachers express. As a result it is important to choose my words carefully within the interviews and reflect on each interview after they have been conducted in order to inform my approach in the next.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

3. Findings

This section is concerned with highlighting and examining the perceptions of the teachers' that emerged within the interview process. The section begins with an overview of the themes identified which provides a framework for the more detailed discussion of the themes that follows. The role of researcher reflexivity within the data gathering and analysis phase is also considered.

Following in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts (see **Appendices 7, 8, 9, 10**) three potent and over-arching themes were identified: *empathy and understanding, contextual influences* and a *personal and professional challenge.* These broad themes and their inter-related sub-themes are summarised in **Figure 8**.

Fig.8 <u>Overarching themes identified with their related sub-themes</u>

Theme	Sub-Theme
Empathy and Understanding	ASR Vulnerability
	ASR Strength and Resilience
	Personal Reference Points
	Going the Extra Mile
Contextual Influences	The School Context
	The Community Context
A Personal and Professional Challenge	An Increasing Workload
	Concerns and Frustrations
	Personal Implications

The themes identified were based both on their prevalence within the transcripts alongside individual accounts that captured a unique or in-depth perspective. Whilst

each theme is presented individually it is important to note that they occurred within the context of the wider account, only this wider account can capture the true complexity of the data and the inter-connections that exist between each theme. Each superordinate theme and their inter-related sub-themes will now be explored in turn.

3.1 Empathy and Understanding

A potent theme to emerge from the interviews concerned the way in which the participants' sought to make sense of the presence of ASR children within their schools, and how they psychologically conceptualised their experiences. This broad superordinate theme was identified as it emerged across each of the data sets, although each participant approached the topic in a slightly nuanced manner, something which is captured in the related sub-themes of *ASR vulnerability*, *ASR strength and resilience, personal reference points* and *going the extra mile*.

3.1.1 ASR Vulnerability

The sub-theme of ASR vulnerability emerged in the transcripts of three participants' (T1, T3 and T6). The apparent vulnerability of ASR children is underlined by the participants' perceptions of the trauma experienced by many ASR children:

> T1...I think there is the trauma at the beginning always, dependant on the situation, there was a child who came from The Congo... was very traumatized.
> T6... ...she was obviously suffering major trauma at losing her mum, nobody ever

> actually said but I am guessing that her mother had been killed.

The anticipated trauma experienced prior to arrival in school often appeared to underpin the teachers' perceptions that ASR children experience a sense of difficulty or challenge in settling into their new surroundings in school, particularly within the classroom context:

> T1 ...he was having to process the fact that he was in a different country, a different school, a classroom with different children who he probably not met children from that many places before.
>
> T3... they are scared... just think of the trauma, the changes they go through, and you are trying to settle them in and the children won't have it.
>
> T6...he is still a little bit isolated.

The participants' use of language underlines their sense of empathy and understanding of ASR children and conveys some of the extreme and unpleasant feelings they perceive ASR children to be experiencing. The participants' perceptions suggest they feel the trauma ASR children are experiencing is ongoing and has not merely ended by reaching the relative safety of the UK.

3.1.2 ASR Strength and Resilience

Whilst it may be true that many ASR children are highly vulnerable and have experienced significant trauma, both prior to and on arrival in the UK, three of the participants' (T1, T2, and T4) felt that ASR children are not qualitatively different from

any other children. Some children were likely to conceptualise their life experiences in different ways dependent on their underlying psychological make-up:

> T1... because they're children, they might be very flexible kids, they might not be very flexible kids, depending on what kind of character they have got.

The notion of the underlying strength and resilience of ASR children was an important point to highlight for T2. Indeed children were seen to cope in a much more resilient manner than the adults around them:

> T2...what people don't understand is children are much more adaptable than adults.
> T2...imagine how you'd feel, your dads gone, your two older brothers it's remarkable really how resilient he was and how he was coping, actually coping much better than his mom.

T4 appeared to feel that ASR children are underestimated and are treated differently when in fact they bring a great deal to the school context. Indeed there was a sense of surprise in the following account, where the strength and resilience of ASR children, formed within the hostile climates many of them have come from, allows them to meet the challenges of a potentially hostile new country and culture head on, with an underlying determination:

> T4...you automatically think that they don't know anything but they have got this vast amount of knowledge, the language, the experiences, they have all got that, they come with something.
> T4...I know one or two that have been through a lot, especially in Somalia, and they were pretty strong characters, you know, as I said they didn't know the language

> very well but they weren't prepared to let the children get the better of them, it probably just made them stronger.

The teacher in this account draws attention to the way in which they have 'automatically' made assumptions about the way in which ASR children think and feel, yet the life experiences of ASR children are perceived to have accelerated their learning as human beings beyond that which might typically be expected from children within a more stable environmental context. This excerpt appears to highlight the need for increased optimism and expectation of ASR children, rather than 'automatically' assuming an underlying vulnerability through what might be considered a predominantly western lens.

3.1.3 Personal Reference Points

Empathy and understanding was considered a pre-requite for working with ASR children in an educational setting, although conceptualisations of vulnerability and resilience often appeared to be influenced by the presence or absence of personal experience, or reference points, prior to entering the teaching profession. For example several of the participants' developed vulnerability narratives about ASR children which appeared to be underpinned by an underlying sense of attunement or vigilance to ASR childrens' emotional states, based on how they themselves felt as children when they were in a similar situation. In contrast for some of the participants', without a prior reference point, direct experience of working alongside ASR children and their families appeared to have strengthened a view that ASR children have developed, or possess, a unique resilience:

T4...I was her protector, when I could protect her, but when she was on her own, she was on her own, and I was probably more protective of her, than other teachers, you know, I just thought it was horrible, and it was probably because I went through the experience when I was at school, because I was different, people began to distance themselves from me until they actually got to know me.

T2...I actually think that he was very happy. You know I thought ...you think you've been through all of that you're just going to be sad for the rest of your life but obviously that change of coming here.... there was , I remember when he actually told me his story, I cried and I felt such a wuss because he was just telling me. And he said, he ended up comforting me. Don't cry miss it's alright. And he was just kind of very big and brave.

The account from T4 highlights a number of key perceptions. The use of language such as 'protect' implies that their school context can be hostile to ASR children and that she made a significant emotional investment to correct this. The account underlines the need for teachers to be aware of the challenges facing children that may be considered outsiders, and implies that those without prior experience may miss the true reality of the experiences of ASR children. There is also a sense that the T4 may have felt that teachers did not offer them enough support whilst they were in school and that there is a need to right this wrong with those they now work alongside by helping them to integrate and get to know their peers. There is however a sense of powerlessness and frustration in the account that draws attention to the isolation that some ASR children may experience when they are beyond the reach of supportive adults.

For T2, who by their own admission came from a white middle class background, the sheer magnitude of the experiences of ASR children weighs heavily and causes

personal distress based on an underlying assumption of how they themselves would have experienced those events. However in working alongside an ASR child and understanding their perspective there appears to have been a realisation that inner strength can arise from external adversity.

For T1 referent points were seen to be important in coping with the presence of ASR children in school, both emotionally and practically:

> T1...I am quite lucky because of my background, I don't find it very daunting, I think that teachers sometimes find it very difficult.

T1 uses social comparison here to measure her experience against those of her colleagues. Implicit within this account is the idea that prior experience helps teachers' working with ASR children to lessen the impact and reduce some of the feelings of helplessness and incompetence that some teachers' may feel when faced with ASR children in their classrooms.

In the excerpt below T4 discusses a common bond amongst their staff team which underpins the empathy, understanding and positivity they feel for ASR children. This commonality between the staff is rooted in the shared backgrounds of the teaching staff and ASR children. This appears to serve a protective function within the staff team and allows them to work more effectively alongside ASR children:

> T4...Amongst our staff, our staff it's, I think it's quite positive, it is yes, because somewhere along, most of our lives we have had parents who actually came over to

Britain and had us here, so a lot of us have that in common, so, and also some of them are coming from war torn countries.

3.1.4 Going the Extra Mile

The empathy and understanding demonstrated for ASR children meant that for two participants' (T6 and T3) it was important to 'go the extra mile' for ASR students. For them direct contact and experience of working with ASR children appears to lead to increased teacher effort to be inclusive:

T6...basically they are all the same as the other children, just occasionally when you know their background you know you need to be a little more patient with the girl that I have got at the moment who is, whether she gets to stay here or not.

Within this passage T6 indicates that personal experience and an awareness of individual children's background leads them to change their attitude and approach to teaching, despite a belief that fundamentally all children are the same. There is also an emotional response here to the presence of ASR children which leads the teacher to change their own routine behaviour within the classroom. Within this passage T6 also draws attention to the often temporary nature of ASR childrens presence in school and underlines the importance of knowing about the pupil's background. In this way going the extra mile may, from a compassionate perspective, can help the child have a slightly more supportive time, at least in the short term.

This inclusive attitude may not extend to all teachers' however:

T6....but there are a lot of members of staff here, not many but some members who will go the extra mile, but probably treat them, just that little bit, so nobody really notices but very kind to them.

Here T6 appears to be demarcating two different types of teacher within the school, an in-group and out-group. Membership of the in-group is apparently seen as something that needs to be concealed from staff and other pupils and the participant was almost embarrassed to admit this. This may be linked into the vulnerability conceptualisation of ASR children that some teachers may hold. Similarly it may reflect attitudes within the wider staff team that are less sympathetic to ASR children and their plight and the teacher fears challenge if the views she holds were to come to light. This account also appears to suggest that the teacher concerned perceives others in the staff team to be less supportive and fears being judged by her peers for such behaviour. Furthermore the reticence of the teacher may also indicate a concern on their part that they are maintaining appropriate boundaries with ASR children.

Going the 'extra mile' also helps to develop relationships with ASR children which may remove unhelpful constraints on their work:

T3...You've got to have a boundary but just going that little bit extra and do you know like it removes barriers.

For T3 going the 'extra mile' was apparently underpinned by a sense of social and moral responsibility or obligation which led them to move beyond that which they might typically do for other pupils.

> T3...really doesn't bother me but when somebody knocks on your door and asks for help whether it's families or children you do it, its humanity, forget the politics, forget, you know it doesn't matter who walks, asks for help, you know what do you do.

3.2 Contextual Influences

A second theme to emerge from the interviews concerned the way in which the participants' conceptualised the environmental influences that are seen to be in operation around the ASR children they have worked with. This broad superordinate theme was identified as it emerged across the data sets and captures the sub-themes of school and community contexts. A number of differing perceptions were made about these environmental influences, from both a positive and negative perspective.

3.2.1 The School Context

Four participants' (T1, T2, T3 and T4) framed their school context as something of an idyll, away from the harsh realities of an external context:

> T1... I think it is quite easy for children who are asylum seekers to feel accepted quite quickly here, because it's nothing new in this school, because in other parts of the city it would be something completely different, so it would be difficult for those people, but here it's just part of life.
>
> T3...but you've got to make that sort of homely feel, the sensory, that's what you have got to get their senses alive, just think whenever you think back about your own education you know what you can remember, it's the senses, it's the feelings, did you feel safe...

Within these accounts the participants' frame their school context as a bounded community, a 'home from home' where ASR children are 'accepted' because it is 'part of life'. The school idyll concept creates a sense of safeness and certainty for those children. There is also a sense of pride and satisfaction that despite, what are undeniably challenging circumstances, these two teachers' are willing to protect those that are vulnerable. For T1 their school is on the frontline, set apart from other schools that may not be able to cope, where battles are fought but the challenge is embraced.

Implicit within the school idyll concept is the idea of inclusivity:

T1...but the school is very supportive towards those children...It's our job to look after the children, so they will be looked after here.

T2...I think that again because of who we are, because of the way our school is ...err relationships are very positive... but this comes from the SLT really, the Head in particular is pretty inspirational.

T4... as a school we celebrate the people that have come over here, and we also talk about them within our curriculum, we talk about cultural identity, where they have come from and try to make other children value everybody in the class, you know, if you're a bit different.

T1 was particularly protective in her defence of ASR children and this appeared to be underpinned by a sense of moral obligation or responsibility, with an implication that ASR children may not be looked after elsewhere outside their school context. All three of these accounts hint at the importance of the wider school ethos or approach which fosters a supportive atmosphere for ASR children and is a significant part of the school idyll they seem to be portraying. However an important aspect of this

inclusivity was seen to be the response of other children within the school to the arrival of ASR children:

> T4...the school embraces them, it's making them feel comfortable, that you are welcome, and when the child comes in, it's must making them feel there's somebody in the class that they can relate to them, you know, can buddy them up, can look after them.
> T2...other kids are always there to help.
> T1...especially the children themselves when a kid comes into the classroom they accept that child straight away...the kids feel that is their responsibility to take that person under their wing, and show them around the school and play with them.

School ethos appears to be closely linked with the reactions of the children already attending the school. More importantly there appears to be an expectation that the children are 'always there to help'. Other children are seen as something of a resource for teachers to use, to help them during the particularly difficult period when a new ASR child arrives. This suggests there has to be a whole school response to their arrival; it is not something that can simply be managed by the adults within the school. In this way the participants paint a truly inclusive view of their school contexts and build on this image of a school idyll.

However perceptions of an inclusive school idyll were not universal. For example issues such as bullying, teacher pressures and the challenges of inclusive practice were discussed by two participants', which appear to contradict the idealised imagery of some of the participants'.

For T4 bullying was a significant and distressing factor:

T4...she went through a lot when she was here... for the children in the class it's been an opportunity for them to be quite nasty toward asylum seekers.

T4...bright girl but her personality, they didn't take to her at all, and for the whole year she used to walk around like this, and that was mainly because they wouldn't accept her, and I just thought it was horrible, you know you just used to watch her in assembly, and you could tell things were going on, even though there was a bit of a distance in the chairs, still they were trying to target her, they were horrible.

T4...but there is always one or two children who just target them.

This account contradicts some of the statements T4 made previously in depicting their school as something of an idyll. This highlights the variable nature of ASR childrens' experiences within school and means that overarching statements about inclusivity must inevitably be treated with a degree of scepticism. The teacher concerned seems to imply that they experienced a sense of powerlessness, that they could simply not make things better for the child concerned. The sense of inevitably about bullying is interesting as this participant was the only one to surface these thoughts. As noted previously this participant freely admitted that they had experienced bullying when they were in school, which clearly indicates an underlying sensitivity to the experiences of children who may be considered as outsiders. Alongside managing bullying issues some of the pressures experienced by teachers' working with ASR children as part of a larger class were articulated by two participants:

> T4... (Interviewer: So, you've got a new EAL teacher?)... Well actually it's supposed to be me, but I haven't even addressed the role properly because I have got so many roles at the minute... I haven't forgotten it but it is another thing.
>
> T4...teachers will say how can I include them in our curriculum and this and that... everyone is really busy.
>
> T3...It does grind you down day and day out, and but then you go home, take a breather and come back and you a day anew.

T3 and T4 frame the role of the teacher in very challenging terms, with many complex roles to play that can 'grind you down'. The presence of ASR children appears to add to this level of challenge, and according T4 leaves teachers' in their school feeling frustrated and uneasy about how to fully include ASR children. Interestingly this is in an area with a highly mobile population where it might be assumed teachers would receive more support in matters such as curriculum planning. The use of the word grind is highly evocative of difficulty and struggle, but the teacher concerned possesses great resilience in returning to the battle every day. The presence of ASR children compounds this struggle although T3 was a passionate advocate for ASR children, and felt we all have a moral and social obligation to support them. T3 also discussed the challenges within the staff team at their school however:

> T3 ...lots of people have prejudices, that's them, you can have, freedom of choice and that, your own voice and your experience you have it but keep it to yourself, do not pass it on to other members of staff, there are times when I find things offensive, I don't like that, I don't like what you do and I challenge, and I do challenge.

Within this excerpt T3 discusses how they feel they have to battle with the prejudices of staff colleagues at times and an underlying sense of negativity towards ASR

children. The teacher does not wish to dictate to other people with regard to their views but feels that they have no place within that particular context. However she appears to frame this as a lack of professionalism, that people cannot separate their private and professional thoughts. Furthermore there is a note of contempt in her account and this teacher feels angry about this and reinforces this message by repeating her assertion that she does challenge.

3.2.2 The Community Context

Broadly speaking the majority of teachers' perceived the school context as a protective factor in the lives of ASR children. In opposition to this the community context was seen to be complex and challenging.

For four participants (T1, T2, T5 and T6) there exists a hostile external community facing ASR children and their families. This can include racist views which are seen to sit hidden beneath the surface but which are merely dormant and waiting to erupt:

> T1...No it's not, it's underlying, it's sitting there, and there is no direction for that to go, I suppose.
> T6...you hear this stream of rubbish that people say...It's a very challenging from that, I think that they do experience racism that they would in whatever area, I think it's a different kind of racism possibly from all different people.

The idea of the school idyll was again strong here, as a bounded community or protected space. There was reference to the school gates or big gates which appears to underline a need to regard the school as serving a protective function:

> T1... think that their experience of school would be extremely different from the local area, myself, because if a very safe place, the school is, it's got big gates around it, there's lots of greenery everywhere, it is a contrast to the area that it's in.
> T2...they get to know people who live in this country and what we are about and what we like because actually it's not so like that out of the school gates.

T2 discusses the interactions between staff, pupils and parents that occur and places this in opposition to the perceived disconnect that occurs between communities outside of the school context. The school environment actually forces people together and this can have a beneficial effect as it can reduce misunderstanding and increase tolerance. This also highlights that even in areas of high migration and ethnic diversity there is an apparent lack of contact between people.

For T1, in a school with the highest ASR population and highest mobility, the understanding teachers' have of the wider community appears minimal. Indeed the safe, bounded school community is perceived to be disconnected from the immediate community surrounding the school:

> T1...I don't any of the teachers would have a massive grasp on it because we don't live here.

This excerpt reinforces the perception that their school has become a community within a community. Indeed T1 perceives staff to be outsiders coming to work in the area with no ties to the community other than professional ones. It also perhaps reflects a sense of powerlessness from this teacher, that they are unable to change things within the wider community.

In contrast to this view one teacher (T5) from a different school, but with ties to their local community, emphasised the community bonds and engagement that exist around their school despite the high mobility of pupils and their families. The school context was seen to be an important aspect of this connectivity, for example in the development of positive teacher-parent relations and the bridges that are built to bind them with their local community:

> T5...we have now been able to build that bridge, so it's been very useful, it can be a positive... so it's building those bridges where I can... we are using the experiences we have had in the past to build bridges for the future.
>
> T5... and they see school as a threat, get those barriers down, we have got lots of activities, we have got the Christmas fare coming up, looking for volunteers, so just through the life of the school, we just try to make parents feel, that yes, your child doesn't just come here you are part of the community.

The concept of building bridges implies that T5 felt their school were islands within their community, and that efforts have made to improve psychological and physical accessibility to that place. This teacher envisages a central role for schools in supporting people to feel part of the community. There is a real self-confidence in this account which underlines the teacher's own sense of belonging within this

community, which appears to fortify them and give them a great confidence. It also underlines how invaluable an understanding of the local community can be in working effectively with all parents, and particularly those from ASR backgrounds. T5 also discusses using prior experience to inform future practice. Supporting ASR children is implicitly framed as a learning journey, and interaction with the community is able to increasingly help them respond appropriately to their needs. The language used within this account also portrays a great sense of determination on the part of the teacher to be proactive and forge links, where other teachers' operating within a psychologically bounded school context may not have the confidence to do so.

3.3 A Personal and Professional Challenge

The final superordinate theme concerned the personal and professional challenge experienced by all the participants' in working with ASR children, and the impact they can have on the functioning of the school. Working with ASR children is seen to be highly challenging yet ultimately rewarding and occasionally life changing. However this theme captures some of the frustrations experienced by teachers', not necessarily directed towards ASR children but often at the inflexibility of LAs and the sense of expectation placed upon them within the education system.

3.3.1 An Increasing Workload

For three of the participants' (T2, T3 and T4) working alongside ASR children creates a considerable amount of extra work and stress:

> T2...yes its harder work because you are differentiating in a lot of different ways... sometimes you need a bit of a chivvy along because it is especially hard.
>
> T3...the challenges faced by the teacher is enormous.
>
> T4...think if they come in now teachers feel, in a way, it's a challenge, on top of everything else they have to do, and on top of all the special needs children that are in classroom struggling and they have to spend time with the new arrival, you know trying to get them into the language and this and that, it's hard work on the teachers, it's not a negative, it's not nasty, it's just something else on top of my busy schedule.

The three excerpts draw attention to how challenging the role of the teacher is within a modern urban school. In a sense the participants' are framing the work context as an ongoing battle with ASR children adding to their stress levels within the classroom. T2 appears to allude to a lack of motivation on occasion in the face of this battle and the need for additional external support to help them continue to function. T4 justifies her feelings on the basis on that isn't being 'nasty' or 'negative' but is merely seeking to draw attention to the added complexity the presence of ASR children creates.

T2 goes further:

> T2...I think you could consume yourself with it.

Within this T2 is referring to a need to constantly respond to the new challenges of having ASR children within the classroom. The use of the phrase 'consume yourself' is highly evocative and implies that the teacher feels they might disappear beneath the weight of expectation and the pressure they put on themselves to perform.

3.3.2 Concerns and Frustrations

The arrival of ASR children in school appears to add another layer to the stress and workload placed upon teachers. Perhaps as a result of this during the interviews a range of frustrations surfaced regarding ASR children, although none of these frustrations were apparently directed at the children themselves. Rather the frustrations experienced by teachers' can be conceptualised in terms of personal, systemic and societal factors. Personal frustrations concerned the impact that ASR children have on the teachers' themselves, both personally and professionally.

For two teachers' (T1 and T2) the presence of ASR children in their schools and classrooms appears to highlight a sense of personal challenge and frustration within themselves:

> T1...how am I going to support this child, and if you're not supporting that child in the way you are supporting everybody else, you are letting that child down a little bit.
> T2...there is a bit of it in your heart that probably thinks you know I could probably do this better...so the impact on you erm, it's quite massive and it could, if you let it, bring you down because you want to do the best for the individuals.

The above accounts highlight the soul searching that the two teachers' concerned experience, questioning themselves and their practice and heaping additional pressure upon themselves. The accounts offer a brief window in to their world and suggest a sense of inner turmoil or guilt that they are not doing enough. Both participants do not appear to believe that there response to ASR children is

adequate, that the children themselves present a different challenge to the others that they do not perceive themselves to have met.

Within the following excerpts the emphasis shifts slightly to the external pressures that challenge the individual teacher:

> T1...it very frustrating for teachers though especially when children don't speak English.
>
> T3...make sure your feelings and your frustrations are not then passed on to children.
>
> T3...some teachers say we can't teach these children but I'm thinking yes you can, you have just got to be a bit more creative, what you've to do is fight their corner.
>
> T4... I think initially because there is so much pressure put onto you, you know, I think they see them as, they do more see them as a challenge in class, you know, in terms of, you sort of get your class where you want to and you get a refugee or new arrival who hasn't got any English or anything like that. I think with all the pressures that are on teachers, I think they are sympathetic, but then with their huge workload as it is, it's like another on them.

T1 refers to her frustration at the language barrier when working with ASR children. This appears to arise from the practical sense of not being able to complete her job effectively, alongside a more instinctive frustration that she cannot build a deeper level of relationship with the children themselves. For T3 any level of introspection and inner feeling has to be contained and managed so that the children themselves are not involved. However T3 discusses her sense of frustration with colleagues over their attitude to new arrivals. Implicit within this however is the sense that she perceives her colleagues to feel they are not capable of teaching the children, that

they lack the skills and perhaps the energy to rise to the challenge. The use of the phrase 'fight their corner' also appears to underscore her view that teachers should adopt a wider role in relation to ASR children. That is in addition to teaching teachers should have a more prominent and active role in advocating for these children, rather than simply passively accepting/ critiquing the status quo. For T4 remaining 'sympathetic' for ASR children is difficult given the heavy workload and expectation that is placed upon teachers.

All of the participants revealed a deep sense of frustration with systemic pressures placed upon them, which were seen to act as a significant barrier to their work with ASR children. Systemic factors covered a wide range of issues. For example a lack of information about ASR children was a significant concern for two participants:

> T6...have only just found out that the other children, they were refugees...I think you do need to know, need information.
>
> T1... but information like did they all come together or have they been separated for a period of time, you get to know intricate details about the family only when social services get involved, and only then you only know the surface details.

For one participant (T2), a member of the schools senior leadership team, her experiences of Ofsted and the school inspection regime create further stress which adds to their sense of frustration:

> T2... So it's crazy. You find yourself trying to justify your results a lot here. That's my job all of the time.
>
> T2...And you know it's just so simple. (Laughs) just so simple! Come in look at the mobility, look at where our kids are starting, look at our percentage of EAL.
>
> T2... it's quite disheartening really because there is so much hard work that goes on.

These passionate excerpts highlight the demoralising impact of external monitoring of their practice, and the lack of account that is taken of context. There is a clear perception here regarding a lack of flexibility within the system. For her the children are not the real issue here, they create a challenging context but the rigidity and lack of understanding within the system mean that the school experiences a double wedge of pressure, from the high mobility and issues the children face and the demanding Ofsted procedures which mean the school constantly has to prove itself. For this participant there is a real sense of her job shrinking which is detracting from the job she enjoys.

T3 mirrors this in discussing the way in which the school are 'forced' to comply with remote or meaningless targets:

> T3...sometimes we say you are looking after the whole child but are we really, because we have got targets to reach, we have got this to do, this to achieve.
>
> T3...it's about crunching numbers making things look good and you know manipulating figures this way or that way, to suit politicians and other people.
>
> T3...Sometimes they are institutional constraints or even wider constraints, policies, but you think, we are doing this and doing this but that doesn't really mean anything, and we are forced to complete such and such a thing and it doesn't, is it really of any benefit to anybody but it just looks good.

There is a real sense here that the participant feels the system is letting all the children in the school down, that compliance with an inflexible external regime to 'make things look good' is essentially meaningless in terms of day to day experiences within the school. Within this framework the experiences of ASR children are adversely affected because the attentions of teachers are necessarily focussed on matters which are merely 'window dressing'.

T5 also discussed the impact of the asylum system on the school and underlines how the mobility has an impact on the whole school, using the term 'ripple effect' to draw attention to the many ways this is likely to filter across the setting:

> T5...lovely child but the threat of going back was over the family and that brought knock on effects within the school, so that uncertainty also has ripple effect within the school, she was never sure if she was going to stay or what was going to happen.

For T5 the 'uncertainty' surrounding the tenure of ASR children is apparently de-stabilising, although she does not specify in what way this is likely to manifest. However from an interpretive perspective it appears that the uncertainty surrounding ASR children may transmit to the staff within the team who could be uncertain how to treat the child and what level of time and support to invest. It also implies that there is an impact or 'cost' of high mobility for the other pupils as it creates a sense of impermanence within classrooms.

T1 discussed her underlying frustrations at wider society. From her perspective British society is basically intolerant of ASR people and largely misinformed, and that this leads to the systems around the school being influenced by instinctively hostile attitudes:

T1...No, I don't think we are very welcoming really, I think that on the surface we are very PC about things but actually I don't think people know enough about those people's lives to understand or to even want to understand...which is very frustrating.

T1...a lot of the things that people think are largely due ignorance of not understanding the position of those people.

3.3.3 Personal Implications

For two of the participants' (T1 and T2) their work alongside ASR children had significantly altered their both outlook on life and some of their relationships within their wider social worlds, due to the deeper level of understanding that they had gained from working alongside ASR children:

T1...I think that, I can't really take away my job from my opinion, in that respect because I wouldn't have the opinions... and values... I have if I didn't work in this school.

T1...To decompartmentalise yourself, this is what I am in school and out of school, it doesn't really work does it when you work with kids.

T2...you talk not particularly my family but old friends they have no understanding of it...it's just that when you've got firsthand experience and you meet people who are genuinely beautiful and who genuinely have got problems or you know there is always a rogue out there isn't there everywhere you go there is always a rogue and

> there's going to be. But I have just met some really lovely people who just want to better themselves actually.

It is apparent that for these two teachers' being a teacher is an identity that transcends the school grounds. Firsthand experience of ASR children has changed something fundamental about their psychological make-up. This has led them to experience some sense of isolation from those around them who do not understand the nature of their work. Teaching in those contexts is part of their own learning journey and has been embraced. Despite the many challenges that working with ASR children brings there experience of working alongside them has changed their attitudes and has fundamentally been a positive experience.

3.4 Researcher Reflexivity

Throughout this research project I have ensured that I have reflected upon and scrutinised my role in the shaping of the data collection and analysis process. This is important in order to ensure that any potential biases within the research from the researcher's own subjective experiences are limited and at least in part mitigated for. As previously discussed this research project is underpinned by my own personal values and professional beliefs as a TEP. This has I believe led to a research project that is broadly supportive to both ASR people and teachers with whom I work closely on a day-to day basis.

Within the data collection phase as the interviewer I sought to develop a rapport with the teachers interviewed and this may have meant that I did not challenge the

teachers or address issues or attitudes that may have been in any way controversial. I was aware that as an 'outsider' within the school I was representing both my service and academic institution and felt in some ways constrained by this in terms of where the discussions within the interviews could feasibly go.

I personally found the interviews challenging to conduct, however I felt that my technique improved across the interviews as I was able to use my previous experiences to manage the conversations. Some of the participants were more comfortable within the interview scenario than others and the dynamic between interviewer/interviewee inevitably varied. I felt that it was important to adjust my interaction style to suit the interviewee; however this is a difficult process within an interview scenario where power differentials may be at play and where those concerned do not know one another.

I tried to keep my own feelings and values out of the research process; indeed I perceived that two of the teachers might have wondered if I had an underlying motive for the research that could be in some way hostile towards ASR people. As a result I felt the teachers were very keen to present a positive image of the ASR children they have worked alongside and their impact on the wider school. However inevitably my own values did surface as each unique interview evolved and this would perhaps have influenced the perceptions of ASR children presented by those teachers.

The interpretation phase was complex and the approach to analysis proposed by Smith et al. (2010) was important as a framework for an inexperienced qualitative

researcher. During analysis I had to listen to the transcripts many times to ensure I fully understood the nature of what was said, and to move beyond a subjective interpretation of the text. I found this process difficult and it is perhaps inevitable that in some way my interpretations are biased and reflect some aspect of own thinking and what I expected to find. For example from the outset I hoped that the research would uncover some level of positivity about ASR children and I may well have been attuned to finding this. It was also somewhat problematic to move from one transcript to the other without in some way considering it in relation to the others, particularly with transcripts 5 and 6. There was a danger of identifying familiar perceptions, perhaps based on my expectations. However re-reading and cross-checking as part of the iterative process has mitigated for this and I believe the patterns across transcripts can be substantiated.

Following the analysis stage I contacted each of the participants to discuss my interpretations. I felt that the six participants agreed with my interpretations too readily and I was aware that there may perhaps have been power differentials at play, where they might have felt that challenging my interpretations would be viewed negatively or as though they have something they wished to hide. The cross-checking process with a peer researcher using the pilot study was also a useful step in the reflexive process. It allowed me to understand another way to interact with the data and identify alternative points to reflect on. I believe this process has strengthened the research and in conjunction with the teachers' feedback means that my own interpretations reasonably reflect that which was said.

CHAPTER FOUR

<u>DISCUSSION</u>

4. Discussion

The present study has utilised a phenomenological approach to gain the perceptions of a cohort of primary school teachers' regarding the presence of ASR children within their particular school contexts. There is an emerging research base in respect to teachers' response to the presence of ASR pupils within their classrooms (Arnot et al., 2009; Children's Society, 2006; Arnot and Pinson, 2005) and this study has sought to add to the limited evidence base that does exist (Pinson and Arnot, 2010; Whiteman, 2009).

Within this discussion the themes developed from the participants' accounts will be related to the four research questions and linked with existing theory and knowledge. The implications for EP practice, the key limitations of the study and potential areas for future research will also be identified.

4.1 Key Findings

4.1.1 What are teachers' perceptions of the individual ASR children they have worked with?

The accounts of the teachers' within this study regarding their personal feelings and experiences of working with individual ASR children were broadly congruent with the extant research in the field. A central theme to emerge from the study related to the '*empathy and understanding*' that the teachers' felt for individual ASR children. For example the accounts were consistently positive about individual ASR children (Whiteman, 2005) and were broadly framed in terms of the compassion and

understanding they feel for them personally and professionally (Arnot et al., 2009). The humanism that teachers' are said to experience in working alongside ASR children was also in evidence, with one teacher in particular focussing upon '*going the extra mile*' as part of a moral and social responsibility they feel towards children which she perceives as '*vulnerable*' (Arnot et al., 2009).

The concept of moral justice, and its links to teachers' feelings of benevolence and sympathy for ASR children discussed by the participants, offers further support to the findings of Arnot et al. (2009). Furthermore there appeared to be a sense that some teachers' had developed an emotional attachment to the most vulnerable ASR children. The findings from this study appear to allow a deeper understanding of how these emotional attachments may develop however. The values and norms that an individual holds will influence their perceptions of the world and dictate in part their interactions within it. Within this study '*personal reference points*' prior to entering the teaching profession appeared to have a significant influence on these values and norms, and the way in which the teachers' perceived and understood the experiences of ASR children. In a sense an emotional or psychological process of characterisation (Abbas, 2002) appeared to be in operation, whereby those teachers' with '*personal reference points*' akin to those of ASR children may have characterised or attributed to ASR children the feelings they themselves experienced. Therefore it could be argued that prior experience leads the teacher to be more in tune and sensitive to ASR children's needs. However those teachers may be more attuned to the negative aspects of ASR children's' experiences and be more influenced by '*vulnerability*' discourses surrounding ASR children. Those teachers'

without '*personal reference points*', and a more personal attachment, were able to be equally empathetic and found the experiences of ASR children to be personally distressing. However the interviews suggest that in certain instances they may be more open to seeing the underlying '*resilience*' that many ASR children appear to possess.

Given this context it seems clear that the presence of ASR children within the classroom does appear to have '*personal implications*' for some teachers', as it has a significant psychological impact upon them (Arnot et al., 2009). For example for one of the participant's, without '*personal reference points'*, their experiences of working with ASR children had changed their outlook on life and impacted upon their own social worlds.

Despite the development of emotional attachments to individual ASR children the teachers' sought to place these within professional boundaries. Certainly little evidence was presented to suggest that teachers become overly involved in the lives of ASR pupils (Arnot et al., 2009). However within the school context there were clear indications that some teachers' will invest an increased amount of time and psychological energy in supporting ASR children by '*going the extra mile*'.

'*Going the extra mile*' appears to indicate an increase in motivation for some teachers' when working alongside ASR children. An individual's motivation for work is likely to be influenced by an interaction between their personal characteristics and the context in which they find themselves (Rolls and Eysenck, 1998). Thus for some

of the teachers' concerned it could be argued the presence of ASR children appears to have a positive impact on their personal psychology, as it stimulates their interest and triggers a change in their behaviour (Tracy, 2000). Therefore it is important to understand that ASR children may in fact positively skew some teachers' attitudes to work, rather than simply assuming they have a negative impact. However there was an acknowledgement within the interviews that other teachers' within the '*school context*' did have '*concerns and frustrations*' about working with ASR pupils which may negatively impact their motivation levels.

Teacher motivation is an essential factor in classroom effectiveness (Ofoegbu, 2004) and their relationships with pupils in the '*school context*' are often central to their motivation and commitment to the job (Day et al., 2006). For some of the teachers' a lack of background information regarding the histories of ASR children was often a source of '*concern and frustration*'. I would suggest that this goes beyond practical difficulties within the classroom and could actually undermine teacher motivation, as an increased knowledge of individual children's backgrounds may augment teacher-pupil understanding and become an important part in establishing relationships with the children. It may also mean that teachers are likely to be more sympathetic to any potential difficulties the children are facing in school.

Three of the teachers' were cognisant of the perceived trauma and '*vulnerability*' that many ASR children have, and continue to, experience. These presumptions of '*vulnerability*' reinforced the benevolence and sympathy felt for ASR children (Arnot et al. 2009). Clearly ASR children are more at risk of having experienced suffering

and dysfunction in their lives (Gable and Haidt, 2005) and it would be disingenuous to argue otherwise. However the presumption that this is always the case was challenged within the interviews, overall those interviewed were concerned with adopting an optimistic '*strength and resilience*' focussed interpretation of the ASR children they had worked with. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) note that even in extreme adversity many people can retain their inner strength and positivity. Within the present study there was clear evidence of the '*strength and resilience*' of ASR children and the strong and well-protected adaptation systems that ASR children possess (McEwan, 2007), which have meant they can cope with difficult prior life experiences and assimilate new experiences regardless of how difficult they might be.

Rutter (2006) highlights the way in which psychology has emphasised vulnerability discourses and has contributed to the image of ASR children as essentially weak and fragile. This is rooted in traditional conceptualisations of the individual within psychology that have tended to focus on pathology, mental distress and adversity, and have resulted in an accepted discourse within society where 'damaged' individuals are seen to require 'fixing' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). There are undeniably a wide range of real life negative influences on ASR children's lives that can cause pathology and dysfunction (Gable and Haidt, 2005), for example once familiar social supports are removed from peoples' lives they may often become highly vulnerable (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). However the accounts appear to reinforce the view that ASR children are not a homogenous grouping, rather there is a need to treat them as unique individuals with their own stories to tell

and their own distinctive psychological make-up. As professionals working alongside ASR children teachers' are perhaps more likely to be more psychologically attuned to negative events, as human beings are more likely to attend to and be vigilant for negative events rather than the positive (Gable and Haidt, 2005). It is important that this negative event bias should not predominate unquestioningly, as positive '*strength and resilience*' based outcomes are distinct possibilities for ASR children.

Positive Psychology is an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions (Seligman and Steen, 2005). For Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) a focus upon hope, competency, positivity, responsibility and perseverance are some of the many components of a more positive and optimistic outlook on human existence. Schools can be an important context for recognising and fostering the '*strength and resilience*' of ASR children and further building on their sense of empowerment. This may seem to be somewhat incongruous given the presumed disempowerment many ASR people are likely to be feeling. However this study appears to show that even in extreme circumstances many ASR children still possess great '*strength and resilience'* and the teachers' accounts appear to suggest that we ought to heed Rutter's (2006) warning with regard to mass pathologising.

4.1.2 How do teachers perceive the interactions and relationships ASR children have with others in their classrooms and within the wider school?

An important theme to emerge from the teachers' accounts was the importance of '*contextual influences*'. Within this the '*school context*' was identified as an important factor in influencing the interactions and relationships between ASR children and their peers. Generally the interactions between ASR and non-ASR children were seen to be positive. Indeed some of the teachers' noted that non-ASR children were often perceived to want to help ASR children and felt some level of responsibility for this. This suggests that some teachers may use non-ASR children as a resource for supporting ASR children as part of a whole school approach. In view of this it seems that the inclusion of ASR children in school should not be seen as solely an adult task. Doyle and McCorriston (2008) identify peer support and peer mentors as an important way of supporting ASR pupils in schools. The perceptions of the teachers' in this study appear to suggest that more weight should be given to the central role the peer group can play in supporting the inclusion of ASR children.

Given this context an emphasis on increasing the number of peer mentoring programmes in schools for ASR children could be beneficial. There is a good deal of extant guidance available on how peer mentoring for ASR children in schools might be developed (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011; Home Office, 2011c: Save the Children, 2011). The idea that mentoring relationships can be used in education to support pupils was first developed by Freire during the 1960's, when he discussed the role mentoring can play in helping children take control of their own lives (Freire, 1997). The role of peer support is fast becoming a powerful means of promoting social inclusion, in terms of promoting personal development, managing school-related problems and supporting social and emotional well-being (Mentoring

and Befriending Foundation, 2011). Indeed mentors as well as mentees may benefit from peer support programmes personally and academically (Allen et al., 1997).

Primary schools nationally are increasingly using peer mentoring and peer support programmes to provide practical and psychological support for all pupils who may be vulnerable or require additional support (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011). For ASR pupils peer support tends to take the form of formalised buddying schemes or attempts by school staff to develop friendship building activities within class, break times or after school (Home Office, 2011b). Formalised approaches to supporting ASR children in school are increasingly being developed (Bell, 2009) and provide a good fit with policy and initiatives such as Every Child Matters (DCSF, 2004a) and Healthy Schools (DfE, 2010a). For ASR children who may be experiencing specific difficulties settling into school a more individualised mentoring relationship could perhaps be beneficial. I would argue that in areas with high ASR populations a formal peer mentoring or support programme should be an important feature of a schools approach to supporting ASR children.

Mentors and peer support programmes can also play a particularly important role in relation to anti-bullying strategies in schools (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011). This may prove to be particularly useful where the bullying of ASR pupils is an ongoing concern. One of the teacher's accounts drew our attention to the significant bullying that had occurred within her '*school context*' and the powerlessness she experienced in the face of this hostility. Her account highlights that even in contexts

that are used to supporting ASR children there remains an ongoing need for vigilance in relation to bullying.

There was some evidence of contradiction in the sub-theme '*school context*'. Although all of the participants' in this study sought to place themselves as '*empathetic and understanding*' towards ASR children there were allusions to attitudes within the wider staff team that might be less charitable. Clearly no-one would want to present themselves as otherwise and those willing to volunteer for the study were more likely to be those with a positive perspective towards ASR children. However negative attitudes are perceived to exist in some teachers' and this brings into question any notion of a compassionate homogenous teacher group (Arnot et al., 2009). The '*increasing workload*' pressures of accommodating ASR children within the classroom, alongside a wide variety of other children with competing needs, can lead to mixed emotions for teachers' (Children's Society, 2006). However it is perhaps surprising that these attitudes might emerge within a school with a high ASR population where teachers' are likely to be experienced in meeting the needs of ASR pupils.

A number of teachers' discussed the inclusivity of their '*school context*' and the positive ethos towards ASR children. The culture and ethos of a school is likely to play a significant role in determining how ASR children are welcomed and supported by staff and pupils. Schools are powerful organisations which preserve and transmit information and authority whilst reinforcing certain values and cultural practices (Hodas, 1996). Children are educated within these complex organisational structures

and outwardly receive a similar educational experience based around adherence to the national curriculum and the following of educational law and policy. However each school has its own unique atmosphere, personality and ethos (Owens, 2004). From an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) this arises from the unique interaction patterns that develop between the individuals within the school, the organisational structure of the school and the wider external influences (MacGilchrist et al., 1995).The interaction of these processes contributes to the development of a unique school culture. The culture of a school has a pervasive and highly complex influence on the school organisation and acts as a hidden curriculum in terms of transmitting values and beliefs to the individuals in the school (Hodas, 1996). The importance of understanding school culture and ethos has emerged over the last 25 years (Thacker, 1994), as schools are increasingly seen to have a complex cultural structures embedded within their daily human activities (Checkland and Scholes, 1990).

School culture needs to be carefully managed and this requires strong leadership (Cameron and Quinn, 1999). Strong and inspirational leadership was seen by one participant as a key factor in the successful inclusion of ASR children within the '*school context*', which underpinned the positive relationships that exist within their school. School culture is created and modified by the leaders in the school (Hobby, 2004) and the evolution and management of these cultures are what defines that leadership (Schein, 1992). Strong positive leadership can create a consistent context that permits a positive school culture to develop, where there is an emphasis on the organisation as a whole; a collaborative focus between all the constituent parts of the

system (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004). Strong leadership and the promotion of a positive school culture tends to lead to a focus on teaching and the development of a learning community with a positive approach to diversity, the welfare of pupils and the engagement of parents (Muijs et al. 2004). All of these factors will have a significant impact on the relationships within the school, including staff and pupil expectations of one another (MacGilchrist et al., 1995). Clearly in schools with high ASR populations strong leadership could well be an important factor in managing the challenging '*contextual influences*' and '*personal and professional challenges*' that teachers appear to face.

School systems are constantly expected to change their ways of working in response to internal and external pressures (Marzano et al., 2005). Within the present study for example internal pressures such as the unexpected arrival of ASR students and external systemic pressures such as Ofsted were a source of considerable '*concern and frustration*' for several teachers', and appeared to have an impact on staff and pupil relationships due to the '*increasing workload*' placed on them. The culture of the school will play a significant role in how change processes are managed. Schools' which welcome change and have supportive management structures will create an organisational culture that is better able to cope with the demands of change. However staff who are stressed and unable to work effectively may reflect the fact that the school culture and structure have not assimilated these changes effectively and are unable to re-establish a stable equilibrium within the wider system (Lewin, 1951).

According to Martin (1992) on one level school culture can be seen as highly functional with consistency, consensus and clarity being central features. However school culture is often more complex than this as a series of sub-cultures may coexist within the daily relationship patterns in schools. Furthermore aspects of school culture can be highly fragmented where ambiguity is central in the day-to-day life of individuals and culture is constantly being reworked through interaction. The participants' perceptions appear to reflect this complexity with some perceiving their '*school context*' to be essentially functional and coherent whilst others referred to a fragmented school culture where other teachers' appear to hold different attitudes and perceptions towards ASR children.

4.1.3 What are teachers' views of the inter-connections between the school and community that an ASR child resides within?

Within the theme '*contextual influences*' a further sub theme of the '*community context'* was apparent. Teacher perceptions of the inter-connections between the '*school context*' and the immediate ASR '*community context*' within this study were generally seen to be positive in terms of day-to-day contact in and around school, although achieving connectivity was often seen to be a significant challenge with the '*increasing workload*' constraints and expectations that are placed upon teachers. The perceived impact of community influences on ASR children was unclear as there was some variety in the individual accounts. None of the teachers' perceived their school to be at the forefront of racial community tensions (Arnot and Pinson, 2005), however there was an acknowledgement that these may exist and are likely to impact upon ASR children and their families. Several teachers' also discussed

'*concerns and frustrations*' that there was the potential for hostility towards ASR children and their families outside of the school gates.

The '*school context*' was seen by one participant as a venue for bringing communities together and perhaps reducing community conflict. However there was some contradiction within the accounts regarding the links between school and the wider community. For some teachers' without personal ties to the '*community context*' the '*school context'* was conceptualised as an isolated 'community within a community' with very few links to the complex and challenging wider community outside of the school grounds. Conversely for some of the teachers' with their own personal ties to the locality there was a perception of community bonds and engagement with ASR people and other community members outside the school gates. These contradictory accounts make it difficult to judge whether the schools in this study lie physically and psychologically at the heart of their local communities.

Turner and Crisp (2010) have identified the crucial role that the school context can play in fostering social cohesion, both locally and nationally, through the facilitation of regular positive contact between pupils and parents from different communities. Allport (1954) first discussed the value of interpersonal contact between groups as an important way in which to reduce prejudice and develop inter-group understanding, a phenomenon known as the contact hypothesis. However contact alone does not guarantee a reduction in discrimination. Subsequent research has demonstrated that contact success is dependent on many factors and conditions (Pettigrew, 1998). For example contact has to be well managed with all groups and their members having

equal status, sharing a common goal, having the opportunity to develop friendships and having some shared sense of adherence to authority and social norms (Pettigrew, 1998). Furthermore the nature of the contact and the extent to which it occurs across differing contexts, the existing social support structures and the extent that contact is reliant on co-operative interdependence are also key factors (Verkuyten and Steenhuis, 2005). Clearly facilitating interpersonal contact between groups is highly complex and requires skilful and sensitive management. Contact alone does not create social cohesion and may in fact be detrimental if the quality of that contact is poorly managed (Van Dick et al., 2004).

The *'school context'* can play a central role in supporting ASR children and their families to feel part of their community and promote greater understanding, if schools are self-confident and pro-active in forging links and are able to move beyond the psychologically bounded '*school context*'. However to build bridges between schools and ASR communities and remove the barriers that may exist between different communities is highly complex and requires a deep understanding of how best to facilitate contact and the optimum conditions under which this should occur. Given the '*increasing workload*' constraints that some of the teachers' felt themselves to be under it is doubtful whether they would have the time, resources, facilities or skills to overtly foster community cohesion through regular positive contact between groups. However schools are one of many important contexts for ASR children and their families and can perhaps be an important starting point for wider community cohesion work. From a personal perspective I believe schools and certain teaching staff members may be well placed to play a crucial role in shaping community

relations given appropriate training, ongoing support and the necessary funding and resources.

The development of school and ASR community links could potentially be problematic given the cultural and communication barriers that are said to exist between ASR communities and the school context. For example poor home and school communication may often be a barrier to the development of positive relationships; in particular where ASR parents feel they cannot approach schools or lack the language to do so with confidence (Manyena and Brady, 2007). With a shift in focus however school settings are in a position to offer the social support that many ASR people need. This is not to suggest that teachers should become social workers but merely to raise the notion that schools and other support services could play a much broader role in supporting ASR children and their families.

One participant noted that it was often the adults around the ASR child who are '*vulnerable*'. As a professional working alongside ASR people this suggests that community-based intervention could be an important way of directly and indirectly supporting the needs of ASR children. Smail (2001) notes that the difficulties people experience are in part based on problems coping with social environments because we are, ultimately, what we experience. Indeed material social experience is perhaps the most significant factor influencing how we think, feel and behave. Community psychology (CP) seeks to understand how people operate within their own social worlds and how this understanding can be used to help improve people's well-being (Orford, 1992). This ecological perspective acknowledges that people exist within a

series of inter-related social systems. Consequently community psychologists question whether change can occur for an individual if the environmental factors surrounding them remain the same. Thus the emphasis within CP approaches is upon community-focussed positive prevention and early intervention, based on the active engagement of individuals within the wider community. Given a context of positivity and engagement with the ASR community it may be possible to move beyond individualising psychological discourses that construct ASR children as a problem (Boyden and Berry, 2004). Rather community-based psychological intervention could perhaps be a more empowering and positive approach to supporting the needs of ASR children and their families.

4.1.4 What are the teachers' perceptions of the factors which indirectly influence the life of an ASR child within the school context?

Within the '*school context*' sub theme one of the participant's briefly discussed her professional role as an EAL teacher in school. The schools aim in providing such support should be applauded; however the teacher noted that she simply had not had the time to address the role. This appeared to highlight something of a gap between rhetoric and reality, between her espoused theory and theory in action (Thacker, 1994), regarding the way in which ASR children and other new arrivals are included in her school. Her perception that the wider school systems are restricting her ability to do this job is concerning and suggests that ASR pupils remain relatively invisible within the school as the primary academic support for them is not in place. This perhaps reinforces wider concerns that ASR children remain a largely invisible,

or second class, group within the education system even in schools with a relatively high ASR population (Anderson et al., 2008). The failure to adequately assign the teacher time to perform her role appears to reflect the concerns of Pinson and Arnot (2010) that the lack of specific legislation regarding the presence of ASR children means schools are not compelled to view them as a high priority in the often high stress environment of the primary school context.

It was noted that having an experienced staff team was crucial in the development of an inclusive setting for ASR children and this offers some support to the view that many schools with inexperienced staff teams lack an awareness about the needs of ASR children and their families (Reakes, 2007; Beirens et al., 2007). One participant noted that within her '*school context*' there was specific support available for ASR children and their families, but from a non-teaching member of staff. Given the relative inadequacy within the initial teaching training (ITT) programme in relation to ASR children (Butcher et al., 2007) it seems prudent for schools to appoint an experienced teacher/learning mentor within the school as a point of contact for pupils, staff and parents. A specialist role that is clearly demarcated with specific responsibilities could prove to be a valuable resource for school staff, and would give ASR children a voice within the school who could act as an advocate to promote their needs. This may help to reduce the difficulties that some teachers' perceive themselves to face in including ASR children in their classrooms and provide a more co-ordinated and appropriate response to their presence in schools with high ASR populations. The point of contact could also be a channel for training which could

allow schools access to the gathering evidence base regarding how best to meet the needs of ASR children.

Such an approach would be in line with the recommendation that schools have an identified member of staff with responsibility for refugee children in order to facilitate the transfer of background information and to act as a link between school and family (Rutter, 2003). Within this study a further subtheme which emerged related to the teachers' '*concerns and frustrations*' regarding their work with ASR children. This included a lack of pupil information which was raised as a concern by some of the participants'. This was seen to add significantly to teacher stress and create specific difficulties, particularly in relation to language acquisition and academic ability (Rutter, 2001). Some of the participants' reported feeling less anxious about this as they have gathered more professional experience of working alongside ASR children; however the extra stress apparently remains a significant factor for others and may contribute to the air of negativity that can often surround ASR children. A more consistent support structure for ASR children, teachers and parents would clearly be beneficial (Beirens et al., 2007), and a specialist point of contact could also help to support the development of data collection systems and ongoing inclusive and collaborative policy development within school (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).

All of the participants' discussed in some way the high levels of stress they experience. ASR children contribute to this by their very presence, as they increase the demands placed upon them, in terms of '*increasing workload*' and an inherent psychological pressure to do their best for the child concerned. Teachers' have long

perceived their jobs to be highly stressful (Griffith et al., 1999), yet these pressures are seen to have increased in recent years (NASUWT, 2008). Evidence suggests that there are a wide range of stress factors at play within the school context such as workload, poor professional relationships with colleagues, salary, pupil misbehaviour, difficult relationships with parents and the expectations of other staff (Griffith et al., 1999). The effects of these stressors may lead to, in extremis, depression, psychological distress and absenteeism (Schonfield, 1992).

Experienced teachers may be able to draw upon their previous experiences to aid their psychological coping mechanisms using cognitive and behavioural strategies to manage their emotional reactions (Schonfield, 1992). However positive work-based social support can be a significant factor in reducing the stressors experienced by teachers' and help to improve their psychological well-being and sense of job satisfaction (Griffiths et al., 1999). Whilst individual differences between teachers' may in part dictate their response to the '*personal and professional challenges*' they face there appears to be support for the importance of good quality social support for teachers, and more importantly for those who are new to the profession.

The regulation of the education system is managed through Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is based upon a philosophy of 'improvement through inspection' (Rosenthal, 2004). For one participant the Ofsted inspection was a significant source of '*concern and frustration*'. The teacher felt she experienced double pressure from both high ASR mobility and its impact upon the school, and Ofsted inspection with its largely negative short and long-term impact upon the

school and children. The inspection regime was perceived to be de-motivating and disheartening for teachers'. Indeed previous research has shown that it can create high psychological stress which can lead to some staff feeling professionally compromised and intimidated by the inspection procedures (Case et al., 2000), and schools feeling isolated and unsupported (Cullingford, 1999).

Another teacher felt that remote and meaningless targets developed in order to make things look good were of little benefit to schools or ASR children. A good Ofsted report is vital for school success but there was frustration that Ofsted do relatively little formative work to support the needs of pupils, including those from an ASR background. For this teacher this was perceived to be part of a general feeling that the system was letting ASR children down and that teachers' were largely powerless to help, as they are focussed on meaningless activities designed to help them pass inspection processes. Thus for two of the participants the Ofsted inspection was framed as a largely negative intrusion into the daily life of the school, something external to be endured that has little to do with the real process of education (Marshall, 2008).

4.2. Implications for Educational Psychologists Practice

The perceptions of the six teachers' interviewed in this small-scale study highlight the complexity that arises from the presence of ASR children within schools, and the wide variety of differing school contexts in which this has to be managed. Each teacher has brought a complex set of experiences, beliefs and values to their work

which fundamentally shapes their practice and the manner in which they perceive ASR pupils. As a result of this it is clear that teachers' experiences of ASR pupils cannot necessarily be generalised to the wider population of teachers and further investigation would be required before the findings can be confirmed. However the findings do support and build on the existing research and, allied to my own experiences as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, may allow for some tentative claims to be made and recommendations for future practice identified. There have been a number of points that have arisen from the research, coupled with the existing evidence base, which suggest that educational psychology could offer much to help schools better meet the needs of ASR pupils. These points are summarised in **Figure 9** and are subsequently elaborated on further.

Fig. 9 Recommendations for educational psychologists practice

- EPs may need to develop a deeper understanding of ASR children and their experiences.
- EP services need to 'get involved' in promoting the needs of ASR children in schools and supporting school staff in meeting those needs.
- For EPs to develop a working understanding of the evidence-base regarding the successful inclusion of ASR children in schools and communities.
- EPs should use the evidence-base to inform teacher and whole school practice with ASR children.
- Advocating for ASR children and promoting their needs nationally.
- Delivering therapeutic interventions where appropriate.
- Supporting schools to develop reliable and useful information gathering tools regarding ASR children and their families.
- Promoting a strengths-based psychology to counter some of the negativity that may often surround ASR children.

- Develop community-based intervention to facilitate a more family-focussed approach.
- Supporting schools in developing robust peer mentoring programmes.
- Supporting schools in developing cluster-based approaches to supporting ASR children, for example problem solving within context, disseminating best practice, sharing resources and providing training.
- To provide ongoing and 'useful' training for school staff in relation to ASR children and how to best meet their needs.
- To contribute where appropriate to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses to promote the needs of ASR children and their families and develop teacher practice.

Local authorities nationally are facing significant cuts to their budgets as the government seeks to address the national budget deficit. These cuts are likely to have a significant impact on the way in which public services are delivered (BBC News, 2010b). Education is partially protected from the most severe front-line cuts, however schools will be experiencing significant changes as the presumed move towards academies and free schools gathers pace. The way in which support services such as Educational Psychology Services operate and are funded is also changing (DfE, 2010b), and shrinking workforces will mean EPs will need to work smarter, more effectively and in an evidence-based manner. Headteachers are likely to have more control over their budgets and flexibility in the approaches they employ in their schools. The traded services model employed in some Local Authorities (Manchester City Council, 2010) offers I believe, the potential for EPs to work constructively in schools with greater value attached to their work, simply because schools are likely to be paying for the service. The changes to EP services could be regarded as an opportunity for EPs to promote 'big ideas', and raise their profile

amongst those in the field of education (Cameron, 2006). In areas with high populations of ASR children I believe there is a good deal of scope for EP services to deliver evidence-based interventions that will be beneficial to schools, ASR children and their families.

Good working relationships between schools and support agencies such as educational psychology can play a key role in providing psycho-social support for ASR children (Rutter, 2003), yet within the present study none of the teachers' were aware of any current or previous EP input targeting ASR children within their particular context, and were not sure what we might contribute. There is evidence that some schools are developing good practice in supporting the needs of ASR children (German and Ehntholt, 2007). However this study has suggested that implementation of these approaches may be patchy and EPs should be playing a central role in the dissemination of the extensive evidence-base regarding best practice in facilitating the successful inclusion of ASR children. In mitigation many EPs may not be aware of this evidence base and there is a need for its promotion within the profession more generally alongside deepening our understanding of the experiences of ASR children in British schools.

Many of the teachers' interviewed were not initially sure if there were ASR children attending the school, as they are all generally assigned as new arrivals in line with Local Authority policy. It became clear that all of the schools contained a relatively large number of ASR children, and EPs should play a more active role in promoting ASR children as a distinct pupil group worthy of consideration within school, so that

they do not remain a hidden population (Hart, 2009). In doing so there may be a danger of stigmatisation in schools, however ASR children cannot simply be ignored and any threats towards discriminatory practice should necessarily be challenged. In areas with high ASR populations this seems to be an entirely sensible step to take given the potential added stress for teachers' and the wider school system. Furthermore it would also be beneficial in schools with smaller populations of ASR children who have less direct experience to draw upon. Planning meetings would be a useful forum for this in the first instance and the promotion of what EPs might contribute could be discussed and planned. This would also open up opportunities for joint targeted working alongside other agencies.

Given the wide skill-set EPs possess in terms of research and development they may be well-placed to help schools develop information gathering tools about ASR children and their families, and help them to make appropriate intervention and provision choices as a result. There is a need for national integrated information gathering protocols in order to mitigate for some of the negative effects of high mobility on schools, children, staff and families. Although this may prove overwhelmingly challenging such an aspiration should be set and EPs may be well placed to play their part in their development. The broad evidence base regarding good practice in supporting ASR children should be used to inform policy development and as a profession I believe we could be more vocal in raising the needs of ASR pupils at a national policy making level.

As Tier 2 CaMHS professionals many EPs have the skills to deliver therapeutic interventions and where appropriate these could be well utilised in working with ASR

children to support their psychological and emotional needs (Fazel and Stein, 2002). Schools need to be made aware that we are able to do this and EPs need to be open to the possibility of working with ASR children who may be challenging and present with complex difficulties.

Local initiatives such as Supporting Newly Arrived Children and their Families (Hulusi, 2009) are promising in raising the awareness of school staff about the emotional needs of ASR children. However as Rutter (2003) has noted, and this study reinforced, there is a need for EPs to challenge unnecessarily negative automatic conceptualisations of ASR children and their families that may exist in schools, and offer a more optimistic and proactive interpretation. As discussed previously a strengths-based positive psychology can offer much here if it is presented to school within a real world context, and they are offered ongoing support and consultation. Furthermore the promotion of community psychology could play a crucial role in shifting the focus of intervention from individual ASR children's well-being to a more family-focussed approach (German, 2008). EPs could be well placed to support this alongside other community groups and professionals if schools who are buying in services can be convinced of the potential utility of such an approach.

Peer mentoring has become an important part of social policy in the UK over the last 10 years, although as yet there is relatively little research evidence from the UK with regard to its utility (Knowles and Parsons, 2009). However peer mentoring and support could be an invaluable resource in supporting children in school (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011) and mentoring/buddying schemes are apparently

well-utilised in supporting ASR children (Rutter, 2003). Within the present study peer mentoring or buddying appeared to be conducted on an ad hoc basis with ASR children, a useful tool but used informally and with little consideration of how this process might be better facilitated. Dearden (1998), an educational psychologist, documents the relatively successful implementation of a peer mentoring intervention and called on other EPs to get involved. Although the impact of peer mentoring is still to be established fully (Knowles and Parsons, 2009) I believe there is a role for EPs in developing peer mentoring programmes in schools and a more formalised approach could well be utilised to support ASR children, both within and outside the school context where appropriate.

One of the participants in the study highlighted the isolation they feel from other schools in their management of ASR children. A suggestion was made that cluster-based problem solving and information sharing would be beneficial, particularly where there are high numbers of ASR, but perhaps more importantly where there are fewer number of ASR and staff may not have had the opportunity to develop their skills. This group could well be facilitated by an EP if the schools concerned were prepared to purchase the service and as a forum this could be used to raise issues pertaining to ASR children more widely across the region. Such a group could provide advice for schools and perhaps allow resources to be pooled, for example for specific language interventions. The group would go some way to reducing any differential in approach between schools and ensure ASR children have a more consistent experience within the local area. This would also be a useful forum in which to disseminate research evidence and training.

Rutter (2003) highlighted the need for in-service training for schools on meeting the needs of ASR pupils in order to reduce negative stereotyping and the low expectations some staff may have about ASR children (Anderson et al., 2008). As noted the work of Hulusi (2009) has been invaluable locally in developing a training package for schools regarding ASR children, however uptake from schools has been low and none of the schools in the present study had received the training. Schools may choose to purchase the training now as part of traded services but with budgets tight this may be afforded a low priority. Any initiatives should be welcomed but they need to be applied more consistently and promoted more widely. Specific areas should be targeted for support and the benefits of such an approach marketed to schools, rather than waiting for schools to react to any internal problems they may be experiencing in relation ASR children.

In terms of staff training the Initial Teaching Training course would appear to be an obvious point at which to target teachers new to the profession. This would inevitably prove challenging in terms of costs and time and may ultimately prove prohibitive. However good quality research and experiential-based training could be marketed to courses and would likely be well received by trainee teachers, for whom pupil groups such as ASR children may cause significant anxiety. This would represent a truly proactive way in which for EPs to work.

4.3. Limitations of the Study

The methodology, findings and interpretations within the present study should be considered in relation to a number of important limitations. Overall I concur with Smith et al. (2010, p.56) that using IPA as a data collection approach "*invited participants' to offer a rich, detailed, first person account of their experiences*" which was in keeping with the underlying aims of the study. However the findings offer only a brief and time limited snapshot of the perceptions of a small cohort of teachers' within certain specific contexts on a particular day. For example questions could be raised regarding the representativeness of the participants as they were a self-selecting sample. The participants may well have been more sympathetic and empathetic in their perceptions of the experiences of ASR children and therefore were probably somewhat biased in their views.

As previously noted many of the teachers' interviewed were not initially sure if there were ASR children attending the school, as they are all generally assigned as 'new arrivals' on arrival in the school in line with LA policy. Following discussions with staff and senior leadership teams prior to recruitment to the research process it was established that each teacher had previously, and was currently, working with ASR children specifically. I was mindful to focus the interviewees attention towards ASR children within the interviews, however I cannot be assured that the teachers were referring at all times to ASR children. Steps could have been taken to ensure this was the case, for example more careful questioning about the backgrounds of the children they were discussing within the interviews, and perhaps disregarding certain aspects of their transcripts within analysis where there might have been a level of ambiguity or uncertainty.

As previously noted I felt that some of the participants' were somewhat guarded and reserved in their answers. This may have been due to professional constraints and a reluctance to share information, and there may well have been an element of wishing to present the school in positive light to an 'outsider'. Therefore I felt that power differentials (BPS, 2009) were a factor in the study to an extent, although the participants' relaxed and increasingly spoke more freely as the interviews progressed. Two of the participants asked why they had not been able to view the questions prior to the interviews so that they could prepare answers and consider their responses in more depth and detail. However I avoided this as I felt that it may lead to scripted responses which might in some way invalidate the findings. However as part of a different research approach using a different mode of data collection this could well be a possibility.

IPA focuses upon the idiographic rather than the nomethetic which can mean that generalising the findings to the wider population is problematic. However an idiographic focus upon the particular does not merely refer to the study of the individual, as the phenomenological approach is more nuanced than this and takes account of the world of relationships that an individual resides within (Smith et al., 2010). Thus understanding how an individual perceives themselves in relation to a phenomenon can allow for cautious generalisations to be made, although support from further studies in the field will be important. Furthermore within IPA generalisation is not necessarily an issue as it does not claim to create general or grand theories (Smith et al., 2010).

I wanted to approach this study from a qualitative orientation, but with an approach rooted in an inherently psychological stance that illuminates the inherent complexity of human psychology (Smith et al., 2010). Consequently IPA was chosen as the research method as the study was concerned with how participants' experience and make sense of their world in relation to the 'phenomena' of ASR children within their particular school contexts (Smith and Osborn, 2003). I considered using alternative qualitative approaches such as grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) but felt that such an approach would not be conducive to the busy school context, and would not allow a full interpretation of the data in relation to the specific areas I wished to explore. I also aimed to develop an account which would illuminate the lived experiences of a small sample of teachers' and subject the data to detailed analysis, rather than developing broader theories that are necessarily applicable to the wider population.

I also considered using different modes of data collection and this may have increased the depth and quality of personal reflection from those involved. For example I initially intended to use diary recordings as a means of data collection, however on balance I felt that this was likely to add unnecessarily to the teachers' workload, and may increase feelings of stress and anxiety for them. Furthermore written entries may have felt even more restrictive to those concerned, as committing thoughts to paper may have left them feeling exposed and may well have led them to choose their words carefully. I also considered the use of focus groups as means of data collection. Overall however I felt the impact of factors such as group conformity

may have restricted the personal stories that had to be told and I rejected it on this basis. However there may be much to be gained from a group approach such as this and it could well be considered within any future research.

It is important to be conscious of the role of reflexivity in any qualitative study and this was an important factor in my choice of IPA as a methodology. I detailed some of the issues surrounding reflexivity in Chapter 2 Methodology and highlighted the need for an ongoing process of reflexivity by the researcher throughout the research process regarding my own subjective experiences (Coolican, 2004), as the researcher cannot realistically set aside prior expectations and assumptions (Barker et al., 2002). I considered the role of researcher reflexivity in this study within the literature review and within the data collection and analysis phase in Chapter 3 Findings. As a consequence I believe that I have maintained a focus upon critical self-awareness throughout the study and tried to understand how my own values, experiences, interests, assumptions and preconceptions were likely to influence the collection and interpretation of qualitative data (Willig, 2001). This is often a key limitation of many qualitative approaches (Coolican, 2004) and despite my attempts to maintain a reflexive approach to aid transparency and ensure validity and reliability a biased interpretation of the data cannot be ruled out. Furthermore my choice of discussion topics was inevitably influenced by my professional background as an EP, with an emphasis upon strengths-focussed and community-based psychology. I acknowledge that a different and equally valid approach to the research project and interpretation of the outcomes could have been a possibility when considered through an alternative professional or academic lens.

4.4 Future Research

Overall I believe this study has demonstrated that there is much to be gained from involving teachers in research regarding ASR pupils. There are however a number of areas where future research could focus attention.

The use of IPA as a research tool is still in its infancy within the field of educational psychology. As a consequence further IPA research into the perceptions of ASR children regarding their experiences in school in the UK could be conducted, to further develop the evidence base and better understand the depth and nature of their experiences within a psychological framework.

The three schools chosen for the present study provided a relatively narrow focus, given the fact that they were in an urban area with relatively high ASR populations. In order for the findings from this study to be generalised or further substantiated the perceptions of other populations of teachers would need to be canvassed. For example it would be illuminating to conduct similar research in a geographical area where there is a relatively low ASR population or within a more rural context. It would also be important to assess the role gender might play in the way of ASR children are perceived, so conducting this research with a cohort of male teachers could be beneficial. Conducting a similar study within a secondary school would also presumably offer a different perspective. It would also be useful to explore the views

of other practitioners who work in schools alongside ASR children, external professionals such as educational psychologists or community workers for example.

The study has sought to shift the focus from individual ASR children's stories to those of the professionals that work alongside them. Within the study it has been suggested that community-based interventions could be well-utilised in supporting ASR children and their families. Developing an understanding of how schools can play a greater part in supporting ASR communities could be further explored to better identify what works and within what particular contexts.

Further school-based action research might also seek to demonstrate how the implementation of the research evidence base in relation to ASR children is delivered and what this might look like in practice. A pilot study could be also be conducted to assess the role of cluster level support groups for teachers in relation to the inclusion of ASR children to discover if they would be a useful support mechanism for individual teachers and schools more generally.

CHAPTER FIVE

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

5. Conclusion

The predominant focus of the extant research regarding ASR children has centred on developing a deeper understanding of their individual experiences (Hek, 2005a; Rutter, 2003), however there is an emerging research literature focussing upon the practitioners who work with ASR pupils (Arnot et al., 2009; Whiteman, 2009; Pinson and Arnot, 2007). This study has added to the emerging research base in conducting this research with practitioners from a psychological perspective using IPA (Smith et al., 2010). As such it has been a study of people in context which has sought to reveal the perceptions of a small cohort of teachers' about the ASR children within their schools and their experiences of working with them.

The findings from the present study are broadly in line with the extant research in the field to date, but appear to have added further depth to some of the reported findings within the literature. The findings from this study appear to demonstrate that the presence of ASR children within school and classroom context represents a significant challenge to teachers, but that this occurs within an already challenging context for them. Accordingly the accommodation of ASR children may simply become one of many difficulties they experience.

The teachers' interviewed broadly experienced a sense of empathy and understanding for the ASR children they work with, and produced largely positive accounts of their personal interactions with them. The findings appear to suggest that the personal experiences of the teachers' prior to entering the teaching profession may have a significant impact on the way in which they perceive ASR children; as

such they can be a significant factor in shaping their psychological response despite their attempts to frame their work within strictly professional boundaries. ASR children also appear to have a significant psychological impact on teachers' and this may perhaps lead to increased teacher motivation and positive changes in the teachers own identity, although these attitudes may not necessarily exist across all staff teams. A number of the teachers' perceived the ASR children they have worked with to possess an underlying strength and resilience. In light of this automatic negative perceptions of the psychological vulnerability of ASR children should perhaps be avoided.

Pupil interactions were generally perceived to be positive within the interviewees schools and the importance of peer support was broadly emphasised as an important factor in the successful inclusion of ASR children. However pupil bullying does appear to remain an issue and in several instances the attitudes of the wider staff team were perceived to be negative towards ASR children. Overall the need for a positive school ethos was stressed, with strong and inspirational leadership an important factor in supporting the inclusion of ASR children within one school context.

Across the interviews the links between home and school were perceived to be generally positive on a personal level. However the links between school and community were inconsistent and appeared to depend upon the ethos of the school, teachers' personal experiences and the ties individual teachers' felt to the local community. It was acknowledged within several interviews that the experiences of ASR children in their differing communities outside of the school context could be

challenging, however the school context was broadly viewed as an important context for bringing different communities together. It was also noted within one interview that it was often the adults around ASR children who required the most support.

In general the teachers presented a positive image of the schools they worked within. However there was an apparent gap between what is known about how best to include ASR children from the academic literature and national guidelines, and the reality of everyday experience in school. The findings from this small-scale study appear to demonstrate that there remains much to do to facilitate the inclusion of ASR children within schools; much of what is known about ASR children may not filter down into schools. Rather the teachers in this study appear to have learnt on the job with very little theoretical or practical support. This may perhaps be a significant contributory factor to increased teacher stress levels, stress which the current research suggests may be further compounded by external inspection processes such as Ofsted.

Many EPs are working in challenging times with the move to traded services; however the emergent findings from this study suggest that there are a number of important implications for practice and potential areas for future research. The participants in this study commented that EPs are never involved with ASR children in their schools and that they had not even thought of engaging the professions help and support. EPs are, I would suggest, well-placed to play a role in supporting the work of teachers and should perhaps be raising ASR children in schools in their meetings with school staff and advocating for their needs. It is also important that

EPs are careful not to collude with negative conceptualisations of ASR children and promote a more positive and community-focussed approach to intervention. EPs could also support schools in developing peer mentoring programmes, improving social support for staff, disseminating current research and undertaking therapeutic work where appropriate. Furthermore EPs may be well-placed to facilitate information sharing between schools and provide rigorous training for teaching staff both within the profession and prior to entry.

The present study offers a detailed description of six teachers' perceptions of ASR children within three specific contexts. The use of IPA, and its psychological focus, means it offers a new approach to the study of teachers' direct experience of working with ASR children. The findings from this study can hopefully be used to inform future research and work-based practice for EPs. The study has demonstrated that even within these broadly supportive school contexts, in areas with relatively high ASR populations, ASR children remain largely invisible and it is incumbent on all professionals to ensure that the needs of this pupil group are being met, despite the potential challenges that may exist.

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28th October 2010

Dear Colleague

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research study which will form a substantial part of my Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate. I am writing to you to provide you with further background information which I hope you will find useful.

Your contribution will inform my research which is entitled:

'Taking up the Challenge: A qualitative analysis of teachers perceptions regarding the presence of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (ASR) within mainstream primary schools, and the implications this may hold for Educational Psychologists practice'

I believe this study is important because the direct perceptions and experiences of teachers in relation to ASR pupils appear to have been rarely sought within the literature. Rather the focus appears to have been primarily on instructing teachers on how best to understand and educate these pupils.

I have agreed to conduct semi-structured interviews with nine teachers across three different schools within the locality, all of whom have experience of working with ASR pupils. The interviews will be conducted so that I can gain your perceptions around some of the following issues:

- What are teachers' perceptions of the individual ASR children they have worked with, including their own personal feelings and beliefs relating to their presence?
- What are teachers' understandings of their relationships and interactions with ASR children in their classrooms, in the wider school and within their wider community?
- What are teachers' understandings of the interactions and relationships ASR children have with others in their classrooms, within school and within the wider community?
- What are teachers' views of the inter-connections between the different contexts an ASR child resides within, for example between school and home?
- What are teachers' perceptions of factors which indirectly influence the life of an ASR child, for example wider school-based factors, community-based resources and local authority models for supporting the needs of ASR pupils?
- What are teachers' experiences of cultural values, customs and laws within the UK and how these indirectly impact upon ASR children?

- What are teachers' understandings regarding how best to support ASR pupils within the education system?

It is important to stress however that I am concerned with your perceptions and experiences, and although I do have some questions prepared there is scope to follow interesting lines of enquiry. Furthermore there are no right or wrong answers.

Participation in this study is entirely <u>voluntary</u>; you are not compelled to take part. You have been approached purely because you have experience of working with asylum seeker/refugee children. The interview will last for approximately an hour and will take place in school at a time of convenience to you and the wider school, where cover has been previously arranged. The data is to remain <u>confidential</u> and anonymity will be guaranteed. No school or individual will be referred to within the report and the areas the schools are in will not be mentioned either. Teacher's comments will not be feedback to senior staff if they do not wish them to be, but demographic details such as sex and ethnicity will be recorded within the report to evidence the representativeness of the sample, however these will not be stored against an individual's data. The only record of names that will be kept will be on the consent forms so there will be no way of identifying individuals with their responses. Your views will not be attributed to you in any way but will be presented collectively in a research paper (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009). With your permission anonymised quotes may be used within the report as discussion points. It should also be noted that confidentiality cannot be assured in issues surrounding illegal activity or in relation to harm to others.

You may decide not to answer any of the interview questions if you wish. You may also decide to <u>withdraw</u> from this study at any time by advising myself, Simon Bailey Trainee Educational Psychologist, although you do not have to give any explanation regarding your reasoning for doing so. I intend to offer you the chance to change anything you have said immediately after the interview. In addition to this I am willing to discuss my analysis with you prior to write up to discuss the validity of my interpretation. However I will not seek any more interviews or make any further contact with you about this after the initial interview unless you ask me to. I will provide a briefing sheet to summarise my research findings if you wish to receive a copy and I will also be available to visit the school to report the findings if all participants agree this is acceptable to them.

The data from the interviews will be kept and stored in accordance to the Data Protection Act, (1998, modified, 2003). Data will be collected using tape recording to allow word for word transcription. In addition I will maintain some hand written notes to support my thoughts within the interview process. Whilst the data is active it will be stored in a locked cabinet, in accordance with Birmingham Educational Psychology Service's confidential file procedures. Only authorised personnel will have access to the raw data (Trainee Educational Psychologist, Simon Bailey). Consent from participants will be gained to share data with other authorised personnel only. Data will be kept for 10 years following the research and will be kept in a locked cabinet in accordance with Birmingham Educational Psychology Service's confidential filing

procedures (as above). Once 10 years has passed the notes will be shredded and destroyed. The data will not be stored against individual names so participants will not be able to withdraw their data after participation.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information please do not hesitate to contact me. Furthermore you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Julia Howe within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham to discuss any concerns or issues that may arise (0121 414 4865). Once again may I thank you for agreeing taking part.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Bailey
Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of Birmingham
Birmingham Educational Psychology Service

Appendix 3: Consent from sent to participants and completed prior to the study commencing

I have read the information presented in the information letter regarding the study by Simon Bailey for his Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate based at the University of Birmingham and understand the scope of the study and the expectations of my involvement.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis but that confidentiality has been assured. The data will be stored safely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2003).

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the researcher but understand that the information gained cannot be withdrawn following the interview stage due to the anonymous nature of the data gathering process.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name:

Participant Signature:

Interviewer Name: Simon Bailey

Interviewer Signature:

Appendix 4: Interview schedule

Taking up the Challenge: A qualitative analysis of teachers perceptions regarding the presence of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (ASR) within mainstream primary schools in the Midlands, and the implications this may hold for Educational Psychologists practice

Introductions

- My thanks for interviewees time

- Turning on the tape recorder!
- My background and current role
- Clear restatement of purpose- emphasis on confidentiality- ethics with regard to ending the interview etc. Explanation regarding right to withdraw anything that is said during the interview if they are uncomfortable with it
- Re-state what will happen with this information
- Ask initial background questions

1. Can you tell me about an asylum seeker or refugee child you have worked with within this school- *their background perhaps, the context, how did you feel, how did you perceive they felt?*
2. Can you tell me about the experiences of ASR children within your classroom- *for example your relationship with them and vice versa or their relationships with other children, classroom dynamics*
3. From your perspective can you tell about the experiences of ASR children within the wider school- *school procedures, ethos, values*
4. Can you tell about your experiences of the wider ASR community- *for example contact with parents, groups*
5. From your personal experience how do you feel an ASR pupil might experience life in this school/area/country? *Difficulties or opportunities perhaps?*
6. How would you describe your personal feelings towards ASR pupils and their families? - *Complexity of feelings perhaps? Professionally for example or as a member of the wider society. As a mother/father.*
7. From your perspective how are ASR children viewed within the school staff team? *For example as challenge, moral responsibility, sympathy*
8. In your experience could more be done to support ASR pupils within school settings and the wider community? *For example support for teachers, support services*

To conclude

Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have discussed?

Would you like to clarify or change anything you have said?

Do you feel that you have given a fair reflection of your perceptions in relation to ASR pupils?

I would like to thank you for taking part.

Appendix 5: Interview Recording Sheet

Date:
Setting:
Interview Time:
Role within the school:
Length of time within present school:
Experience with ASR children:

Observations (e.g. non-verbal)

Points to return to

Any Additional Information (e.g. re-clarifications, changes)

Appendix 6 Copy of a thank you letter sent to the Headteacher of one of the participating schools

30th November 2010

Dear Susan

I just wanted to thank you for the chance to come into school and interview two of your staff. The interviews went really well and I gathered a great deal of useful and important data. Both interviewees reflected a positive attitude about the school and I left with the impression of a hard-working and committed staff team. I hope those interviewed did not find the process too arduous and perhaps got something from the process too.

I will be using the data from the interviews to inform my study, transcribing the interviews and analysing the data. I will forward a copy of the completed analysis to you; hopefully there will be something of interest in there for the staff to reflect upon.

Once again many thanks and the very best wishes to you and the school for the future.

Yours sincerely

Simon Bailey

Trainee Educational Psychologist

██████████ Educational Psychology Service

Appendix 7: Transcript Analysis

Potential Themes	Participant 1 Transcript	Initial Notes

	Preamble	Normalising-
	I: So...could you tell me about an example of	underlining the
	where you have worked with an asylum seeker	everydayness of
	or refugee pupil.	their perceptions
	P: You always have children who are either new	
	arrivals or have a background of their parents	
Stressful New	are asylum seekers in your classes, so for	Taken for
World	example last year I had a child in my class who	granted
	was from Iraq and his dad came over first, his	assumption
Family	family were, he was still there in Iraq and then	
Disconnection/	when his dad had saved enough money he	
Re-connection	brought the rest of the family over, but when his	Vulnerable,
	dad visited Iraq he didn't know who his dad was	isolated child
	because he had left when he was very very	Empathy,
	young, so he didn't , that was his Dad, he tried	compassion
	to, in his words I think he tried to kick him	
	because he was in his house but he was only	
	very little at the time, (Both laugh) but when he	Difficulties
	found out that was his Dad and in the same vein	managing
	he hadn't ever met any of his uncle's either, so	behaviour
	he came over when he was 7 I think, so no	
	English and started school but I think there, he	
	had behaviour problems, like he used to hide	
	under the table and things like that.	
	I: Possibly a normal reaction to a strange new	Tight unit yet
	world	disconnected for
	P: Yes, I think you normally, well you take into	so long
Practical	consideration that it's a very different	
Issues	environment for them, and not just even the	
	school, the city where they lived, the flat maybe	
Stressful New	that they live in, maybe they lived in a big house	
World	with a garden before, the poverty that they might	
	be going through because it's a very different	
	life, but the other children are always very	
	tolerant of new children that arrive in their class	
	whether they are children who can't speak	
	English or they can, they are very used to it I	
Vulnerability,	think, but it took him about a year and a half to	Supportive
compassion	settle in properly, and then he became very very	context, positive
	confident, but I think that with him, his family	outlook in many
Resilience	were such a tight unit, which you know I think	ways. Positive
	they often are, you know you're in a different	school
	country and you've got to stick together a bit,	
	that he found his confidence in that, so he….	Personal
	I: He's got quite a strong support mechanism,	references, it
	so it helps him out.	plays a
The School	**P:** And because school is very supportive	significant part in

Family	anyway, he felt quite confident **I:** So as a teacher working alongside him, how did you feel? **P:** I think that I am quite lucky because of my background, I don't find it very daunting, I	understanding children and coping in class
Personal reference points	think that teachers sometimes find it very difficult, the fact that the children don't speak any English and how am I going to support this child, and if you're not supporting that child in the way you are supporting everybody else, you	Letting children down? Personal pressure, psychological response
Personal challenge	are letting that child down a little bit, but I mean we work with inclusion in mind so everybody is in the same classroom and they do get outside	Concern for equity, fairness. Additional pressure on
Personal Reference points	support from the EAL people in school, but because I kind of grew up with people from all over the world I was quite used to different cultures, different ways of speaking and I have	oneself Psychologically prepared- normal
	taught English as a second language as a long time before I became a primary school teacher so that was quite normal for me, but if you haven't had any experiences like that and you	Inclusion-school a family unit,
	have lived in ████████ and you don't speak another language, I speak other languages as well, it's kind of easier, I think that it's very	Assumption children accepted
	difficult to kind of develop to those expertise as it's a kind of life experience thing with kids like	
Positive school experience	that I think, but the whole of school is very supportive towards those children and especially the children themselves when a kid comes into	Positive school context- peer support and relationships
Peer relationships	the classroom they accept that child straight away... the kids feel that is their responsibility to take that person under their wing, and show them around the school and play with them. **I:** How do you think that child felt when he came	Deep understanding- empathy for child
	into your class, what was your perception of how he was feeling, that individual child.	Vulnerability and trauma, difficulty and challenge
Vulnerability	**P:** Well he was having to process the fact that he was in a different country, a different school, a classroom with different children who he probably not met children from that many places before, our school is very, very mixed, so there children from all over the world in your	
	classroom anyway, plus the fact that everyone is speaking English, plus the fact that he might be tired, plus the fact that there is stuff going on at home. I always think that it's extremely confusing at first, but because they're children, they might be very flexible kids, they might not	Contradictory-implication of strength and resilience-psychological difference

Empathy and understanding	be very flexible kids, depending on what kind of character they have got. **I:** Do you get to pick up much about their background	Vulnerability and trauma
Presumed Trauma	**P:** I think there is the trauma at the beginning always, dependant on the situation, there was a child who came from The Congo who has a very different situation and didn't come over here with his parents, and he found it very difficult and was very traumatized. **I:** Who did, he stay with **P:** He went to Social Services, straight away when he arrived in the country, he was accompanied with his sisters which is scary, for an adult to arrive in a different country is scary let alone a little a boy. **I:** So, just thinking about in your class, what kind of impact does one child, the lad from the Congo, what of impact do they have in the classroom when they arrive, or when they have been in the classroom.	Trauma dependent on context. Paradox or contradiction here? Care and compassion Empathy- need for adult protection Behaviour difficulties Peer relationships
Negative Impact of ASR Teacher Challenge Environmental influences Peer acceptance	**P:** They can have a negative impact in the classroom because they can't cope with the situation that they are in, but then it's your job to manage that behaviour and to make them feel calm, and I think above all that they are loved and are wanted in the classroom, and they usually settle down quite quickly the other children show them around the school and play with them, we also have, we're lucky because we also have children that speak different languages as well, so you will probably find a child in your class that speaks their language, so that's the biggest thing really. **I:** So do get to find out much, time to find out about these children, do you get time to build a relationship within that sort of hurly burly of the class.	Compassion- responsibility Positive aspects of inclusion The classroom context- cohesive, the needs of the whole
Empathy and understanding	**P:** Yes, you have to build a relationship with all the children because otherwise your class doesn't work, it's not a cohesive unit, it doesn't work. **I:** Specifically with those children on their own. **P:** Yes you have to make time to do things like that, this week there is a new girl in my class who doesn't speak any English, I'm not sure if she is actually an asylum seeker, I'm don't know	Mechanics of making it work, a protective function Importance of environment
Poor background	what her position is, her families position but	Time/ personal investment to be

information	she's arrived from Pakistan and she doesn't speak any English at all, so while the children are reading for example I can spend 20 minutes with that child on her own just talking, looking through a book and trying to communicate with her on her own, so she has a relationship with me, because they need support, their primary person in school is their class teacher, so they to know that they trust that person, and they like that person otherwise it would be quite hard for them.	a good teacher Professional identity, sense of responsibility, investment
	I: Just wondering whether you, would you think it would be useful, the fact that you don't know that they are asylum seekers or refugees, and obviously on one level I could see that it obviously doesn't matter, they are all children and it doesn't matter, do you think that it would be useful to have a distinction. In what way?	Lack of information about ASR children an issue
	P: Yes, because there is a lot of upheaval with having to move to another country, how did it happen? Why?, because parents don't have to disclose that do they, I don't think	Chaos surrounding ASR Negative community influences? Stigma
	I: No they don't.	
School based challenges Personal challenge Lack of information Hostile community Teacher frustration	**P:** But information like did they all come together or have they been separated for a period of time, you get to know intricate details about the family only when social services get involved, and only then you only know the surface details, because you don't get involved in the cases themselves. You don't know what kind of stigma is attached to it or how the other people in the community react to it, you do hear about more extreme cases, you know the boy that was unaccompanied from The Congo, you do hear about that because he has issues.	Concerns and frustrations- basic information useful to teacher Working alongside ASR complex, a personal challenge
	I: Because Social Services are involved?	
	P: Yes, but generally the only way you actually find out things about their past is by the kids telling you, if they ever say, "when I lived here" and that kind of thing, but they do that off their own back.	Trust, deep relationship Doing best in difficult circumstances
	I: In terms of the wider school, perhaps taking it out of the classroom, obviously it seems like a really supportive school here and I would imagine you've got people from all different kinds of background at this school, how are asylum seekers and refugees managed within the school generally in your opinion.	Vague? Focus upon language difficulties/

Practical difficulties	**P:** They are, it's dependant on their level of English, so what happens is, they apply through the local authority and they eventually get a place somewhere and they come to school and fill in a form with the parent partnership worker, which you will meet, it's probably a good idea to speak to her as she actually speaks to the parents themselves, and then they are given a start date, they are shown round the school, they arrive, then Mrs. ███████, who works with the children who doesn't speak very much English, she assesses them, as to what level of English they have, we are quite lucky because that happens in our school, I think that a lot of the time they don't have an EAL, we haven't got a Unit but there's a team of people who work, there is provision here which is really great, so she assesses them then they come back into class, there buddied up with a child, so there's a checklist that we have to fill in, so we have to make sure that they meet the head teachers, they meet the other teachers.	practicalities
Positive school ethos and approach		Induction part of wider positive school approach
School idyll		Peer support highlighted- part of key interventions presented
Importance of peer support		Affinity/respect for setting ethos
		Part of professional identity
	I: This is part of their induction.	
	P: Yes, so there buddied up with a child in their class, they are taken round the school, they look after them at lunchtime and that kind of thing, so I think it is quite easy for children who are asylum seekers to feel accepted quite quickly here, because it's nothing new in this school, because in other parts of the city it would be something completely different, so it would be difficult for those people, but here it's just part of life	
Positive school ethos		
	I: It's part of the fabric of the school.	Responsibility, identity and high expectations of the self
	P: Well yes absolutely.	
	I: That's really good, kind of what I expected and probably why I picked different areas to explore.	
Professional identity	**P:** I think it's probably changed a lot in the last 20 years but I have been here for about 5 or 6 years so in that time I have always had children who are asylum seekers, every year.	A learning journey
	I: Obviously, the school has got a pretty strong ethos in terms of being inclusive which is really good, obviously we have touched on this slightly, do you have much direct contact with parents, is that something that's in your role as teacher.	Superficial contact
		Sensitivity and understanding

Psychological expectations of self	**P:** We have, I would say it's your responsibility as a teacher to introduce yourself to the parents and make sure you have some kind of contact with them, so at the beginning of the day when the children are lined up you say good morning to everybody and at the end of the day you say good night to everybody and wave the parents and the children off, and the children who have just started, I would always make a point in having a conversation with their parents at the end of the day to make sure they were reassured that their child was ok, because for the parents it must be daunting themselves leaving their child. **I:** I think research suggests asylum seeker parents find school interaction quite a distressing sometimes typically if there is an idea of a power in balance, it can be quite an intimidating environment. **P:** I think that I can completely understand that, I think that is good that the parent partnership worker speaks to the parents, because they have somebody that they know, a face in the school, but it's unfortunate that there's not very much time in a school day to make those things more prominent, I think as time goes by if that family stays in this area then you might teach the younger sister or whatever, you start developing more of a relationship. I have had parents who I have helped them with their college work, there was a lady whose daughter was here, they are not here now, but they were from, where did they live? She was I think they lived in North Africa somewhere though, they came over here. I had a relationship with her because I can speak French. **I:** How many languages can you speak? **P:** French, Spanish, a little bit of Italian and English. I prefer French, but I used to translate for her husband because he didn't speak very much English at all, but it's nice when you get a child, it's not very often but if they come in speaking fluent French, but sometimes there is because that's very difficult, say you are doing a topic like, I don't know, the Vikings, how is somebody from Iraq or Pakistan even have the concept of that history and why would they, and then all the children are supposed to be able to	Wanting to do more? Desire to build ties/bonds with community Systemic frustrations Become part of the wider community ASR disconnected, culturally out of place Differentiation, personal effort and commitment Curriculum relevance Flexibility Challenge and frustration- language a key barrier. Blocks work and also personal relationship
Systemic frustrations School ethos Personal investment School-based challenges Challenges and frustrations Defensive of ASR children		

Challenging	get the same learning objective, you've got to try and tailor their work to fit in with that learning objective, so they are doing something to do with that, so I would always teach vocabulary to them in that lesson, so for example if you were doing 'where did the Vikings come from'? they could learn the countries in Europe or label a map or something like that, so they are doing kind of the same things as everybody else.	development?
ASR positivity		
	I: (inaudible time 19 min 53 sec*)** the context there at least.	Defensive?
	P: I think it very frustrating for teachers though especially when children don't speak English because I know that you need to sit one to one to be able to teach them properly in English. I know that they are immersed in English all the time but the modelling, the model that we get from the children isn't always that brilliant.	Protective?
Teacher frustrations		Maintaining positivity but shifting positions highlight complexity
	I: I suppose they might not be immersed in English all the time in their community	Positivity, ASR flexibility
	P: That's another problem is that they go home and they don't speak English, so their English develops more slowly because of that.	Individuality of children
	I: I think even in optimum conditions it takes 2 years to get a basic mastery and 7 years to become what might be considered a fluent speaker.	
	P: They do pick it up very quickly, some children, very quickly.	
	I: Quicker than I did (laugh)	
ASR children as individuals	P: Well quicker than most people, quicker than English kids would pick up another language because of their experiences, I mean they come to school already with a really good skill of being able to speak another language, if they pick up English really quickly, you know, you might have some kids you have been born in Sweden or Finland or somewhere like that so they've got Somali, some Arabic, some Swedish, some English.	Negative community orientation
Defensive		School idyll/ bounded community/ protective
	I: So their brains are more attuned to picking up more languages like yourself	Community in a community
	P: And agile I suppose that they are, but I am looking at it from an adults point of view, the child themselves might not find it as difficult as I might think	Protective/ understanding
	I: I think kids brains are a lot more plastic than ours, aren't they, a lot more flexible at picking	Positive school context

	things up. So we have kind of touched on that so how you think an asylum seeker or refugee would experience this school and would experience the local area.	Moral responsibility- job but sense of determination too
Community difficulties	**P:** I think that their experience of school would be extremely different from the local area, myself, because if a very safe place, the school is, it's got big gates around it, there's lots of greenery everywhere, it is a contrast to the area to the area that it's in, in some respects. I wasn't brought up in ▮▮▮▮, I don't know. I	Impact of uncertainty/powe rlessness to influence
Primary school idyll	know that when say when I was little and lived with my parents, if I went from our house to live in a block of flats or a maisonette here I would find it very difficult, just that thing alone, and they have got the added stress of travelling to another country, sorting yourself out, getting a doctor, getting money, you know, it's hard.	Defensive/protect ive of ASR children and the school context/ preserving her own perceptions of the school idyll
	I: You said that school was safe, apart from the physical things, is there anything else that makes is a safe environment	
Moral and Social responsibility	**P…**but the school is very supportive towards those children. It's our job to look after the children, so they will be looked after here. **I:** In your own mind do you set that up as being safe here but it's not that way outside the school.	Community within a community- teachers outside of this. Real world interpretation- personal experience?
Defensive of ASR children	**P:** I think it would be really hard outside school for them, I think it would be harder, definitely, it depends where they are from as well, because some ethnic groups have a bigger community than others, so and especially here, it fluctuates	Lack of connect between school and community
School as a bounded community	in ▮▮▮▮, there's an influx of people from a certain community, then they leave ▮▮▮▮, then other people with come. I don't know whether the people that have lived here all their	Defensiveness- protecting school context. School are coping have
Disconnected school/commu nity relations	lives are accepting of that transient, the fact that people come and go all the time. I don't know how they feel about that, and I don't think that anybody who doesn't live here, I don't any of the teachers would have a massive grasp on it	systems on place Rhetoric and reality
Teacher/com munity disconnect	because we don't live here. **I:** I have to say, I had heard of ▮▮▮▮, I work in ▮▮▮▮, I work in ▮▮▮▮ and	
Defensiveness	▮▮▮▮, but I couldn't have placed it, couldn't have said where it was, it's quite an indistinct areas in some ways. **P:** Yes it is, you've got the main areas, you've	

	got ███ Street, the railings with its history on there, it's kind of in the middle of a few places.	
	I: The movement of asylum seeker and refugee children, because often it seems that there is a lot of transience.	Personal implication here, an inter-connection between selves, a merging of the self
Rhetoric and reality gap	**P:** That's a big, it's not a problem, it's an issue in this school, because you have got a complete contrast of what the Government, what they look at in terms of data, then you have to always, I mean ███████, she does a lot of data to do with kids levels and things like that and there's always the question of the fact that kids don't stay here, their families move around a lot.	Frustrations- insightful personal referent point, implication that others without prior experience might be more easily influenced perhaps
	I: It's part of the dispersal system isn't it, they spread out across the country and they have to move.	
	P: The school would be a certain percentage if that child had stayed, there is a lot of issues when it comes to data about that really.	
	I: Ok great so... from now on a more of a personal perspective, I've already touched on it, what would your personal feelings be, not necessarily within the school, but personal attitude towards asylum seekers and refugee people be, in a general sense. As a person.	Defensive of school
Merging personal and professional identity	**P:** I think that, I can't really take away my job from away my opinion, in that respect because I wouldn't have the opinions... and values... I have if I didn't work in this school maybe, maybe I wouldn't, because a lot of the things that people think are largely due ignorance of not understanding the position of those people or not ever having any contact with asylum seekers or refugees in their life and just reading what the Sun says, so I if I didn't work in the school I think that be because of my family I would be open to the fact that there were asylum seekers and refugees.	A personal reference point- implication that this is advantageous to her as a teacher
Teacher frustrations		Shifts between personal/professional, naturally shaping one another
Societal Negativity		Can relate to these children
	I: I thought it was really interesting that you said that you couldn't separate out that you work in school because it's part of our identity.	
Protecting school identity	**P:** Yes of course it is, that's my experience of asylum seeker children because I work here, but also it's not the same thing but my mum is Indian and she came here when she was 7 so I have a reference point, I come from a mixed marriage and when I was growing up our life was about different cultures and we used to	An inner motivation
Personal reference points		Certain identity to be teacher- a personal investment?

Merging personal and professional identity	have a lot of students from all over the world coming to stay with us to learn English so if you grow up with that it's kind of innate isn't it really, you don't have to learn a new skill to deal with that. **I:** What part of Indian was your mum from? **P:** She is from the Punjab, my mum is. **I:** **talks more about India** I should say actually it's interesting that I put professionally, it's quite a personal thing that we take on in our identity, especially when we are working about this kind of profession, you work quite closely and you have a lot of contact.	Personal-defensive, protective In-built inner strength
Personal motivation	**P:** I think certain opinions and values, you can't really separate from your job. **I:** It would be very difficult to do that. **P:** To decompartmentalise yourself, this is what I am in school and out of school, it doesn't really work does it when you work with kids.	Social comparison-contextual understanding significant reflections and deep
Personal and professional identity merger	**I:** Do you think with everyone else on the staff team, that that would be mirrored. **P:** Probably yes, I think so, I think even if, regardless of your background I think that because you have that experience of where you	understanding and empathy for ASR children
Empathy-changing identity	have worked you would share that idea, I think probably, I don't know, I imagine so. **I:** There is something called the Contact Hypothesis that suggests that the more contact people have together; obviously as you said the greater the understanding and actually the realization that people come together.	Defensiveness
	P: Also it's also, so for example if you worked for the Council and you worked in a department in the Council, say for example, housing and you	Business like, professional
Defensive of ASR	came in contact with refugees and asylum seekers in that context then your opinion might be different. It's all to do with your context isn't	Oppressive practice
Hostility	it, because we work with children, the heart of that is that the child is themselves, so it would be wrong of us to label them in that respect.	
Teacher identity	**I:** If I said 3 words or 3 phrases to describe your feelings or the feelings of other staff towards asylum seekers of refugees new arrivals, however you want to bracket it, because you have been taking about asylum seekers, in terms of The Congo and Somalia, I would imagine those were asylum seekers.	Empathy, professional, lack of sentimentality. A real world view.
	P: Yes, or children of parents who are studying	Boundaries

	here as well, or working. I don't know all the context of their families. **I:** If I said 3 words to describe as a teacher or putting yourself in the position of another teacher, 3 words to describe your feelings towards them. **P:** I think that you have to be open, clear and caring toward them.	Motivation increased-increased concern, protective
Empathy and understanding	**I:** Do you have to be more caring than you would be to any other people, or it's an extra investment. **P:** You might have to, you probably have to make them aware that you are asking them if they are alright, so they are alright more than other children at the beginning, just to make they know that you are watching them, not watching them, but you know keeping an eye on them	
Maintaining professional boundaries		
Increased motivation	**I:** That you are interested in them, and that you care about them **P:** Yes **I:** That's fair enough, in your experience, I'm not really getting at the school as I don't really know anything about the school at all, but in your experience could more be done to support these pupils in the school setting and within in the wider community.	Hostile wider context?
	P: In England generally, it might be good for children to have intensive lessons at school run by a teacher, or a someone with experience in that respect for an hour a day in the school. That might be a good thing to do, especially with a big community of children with English as a second language, just so that the children understand the grammar of English, because it's very easy to pick up vocabulary but it's very difficult if you speak a different language to understand the grammar and the syntax and all of that. **I:** The language would be the barrier for you, that would be the thing for you. **P:** That is how they are going to get on in this country so they are going to have to be able to speak English properly. **I:** Do you think that's how we are as a society, do you think we are welcoming. **P:** It depends on who you are looking at for that. **I:** What's your perception of that?	Concern with fairness, need to the right thing Concerns, deep of sense of frustration and anger? Highly negative perception, largely dismissive of wider society. Resentment underlying? Defensiveness, personal

	P: No, I don't think we are very welcoming really, I think that on the surface we are very PC about things but actually I don't think people know enough about those people's lives to understand or to even want to understand... which is very frustrating. There might be the odd documentary on television, but are the people who you want to be able to give that experience to going to watch that documentary, probably not, you know, it's frustrating, there's a lot of very negative things said about people from other countries, in the press, you know and obviously there is negatives in every community, but it doesn't mean that everyone has to be tarred with the same brush, and people are very quick to give their opinion about things like this when they don't know anything about it, which is very frustrating I suppose if you ever got into a conversation with anybody like that, but then you don't have conversations with people about things like that, because in our PC society you don't talk about things like that in a negative context in public do you. **I:** It's not very socially acceptable. **P:** No it's not, it's underlying, it's sitting there, and there is no direction for that to go, I suppose. **I:** Is there anything else from what we have discussed that you would like to add to what you have said, is there anything you would like me to take out from what you've said. **P:** I don't know, can I look at your questions. **I:** Yes, sure. **P:** I think that maybe school would be a good place for people, for parents from other countries to be integrated into the community because it's a very neutral place isn't it, maybe the Council could do something about that, that could maybe help. **I:** There's definitely been work done nationally in different areas, I think Newcastle had done work in trying to encourage asylum seeker and refugee parents into school. **P:** And it must work. **I:** It probably does work but it's very patchy, there isn't a massive amount being done **P:** The other thing that I think that they should do is have English classes in schools for kids and	experience? Need to surface things, not sweep under the carpet Negative community wide perception- unsurfaced, suppressed Need for societal/ cultural change Central place of school, central role it could play in community relations- school neutral non-threatening Lack of skills to work with ASR Positivity Engaging parents- making teachers experience more rounded
Hostile British society Frustration Defensiveness /personal experience Negative community based perceptions Centrality of school community		

School based challenges Parental engagement	parents. **I:** I think that would be very useful **P:** With the kids and the parents together but its finding people to do that isn't it **I:** And funding it **P:** Exactly, you might be a primary school teacher but are you a teacher of English; it's a completely different thing, as a foreign language **I:** Do you think the kids would benefit from their parents coming in. **P:** Yes I do, any kind of open afternoon you have or parents evening, the majority of the time, it's always a positive experience for the teacher and the parents and the teacher and the kids together, it's never, in my experience it's always been positive, so yes I think that's important. **I:** We have finished, if there is anything that you would like me to take out. **P:** You can use your own judgment. **I:** You haven't said anything. But professionally I have to give you the opportunity to say that I didn't mean it or to re-phrase something, so what you have said, do you think that is a fair reflection of your views. **P:** Yes **I:** Stopped at 41min 11 sec, (Asks for feedback on interview)	

Appendix 8: Overview of emergent themes across accounts

T1
Negative British Society
'...No, I don't think we are very welcoming really, I think that on the surface we are very PC about things but actually I don't think people know enough about those people's lives to understand or to even want to understand... which is very frustrating...' '...a lot of the things that people think are largely due ignorance of not understanding the position of those people or not ever having any contact with asylum seekers or refugees in their life and just reading what the Sun says...' '...you worked in a department in the Council, say for example, housing and you came in contact with refugees and asylum seekers in that context then your opinion might be different...'
School- based challenges
'...They can have a negative impact in the classroom because they can't cope with the situation that they are in, but then it's your job to manage that behaviour...' '...because there is a lot of upheaval with having to move to another country, how did it happen? Why? Because parents don't have to disclose that do they, I don't think...' '...But information like did they all come together or have they been separated for a period of time, you get to know intricate details about the family only when social services get involved, and only then you only know the surface details...' '...I think that is good that the parent partnership worker speaks to the parents, because they have somebody that they know, a face in the school, but it's unfortunate that there's not very much time in a school day to make those things more prominent...' '...but sometimes there is because that's very difficult, say you are doing a topic like, I don't know, the Vikings, how is somebody from Iraq or Pakistan even have the concept of that history and why would they, and then all the children are supposed to be able to get the same learning objective...' '...you might be a primary school teacher but are you a teacher of English? It's a completely different thing, as a foreign language...'
An Empathetic Understanding
'...I think there is the trauma at the beginning always, dependant on the situation, there was a child who came from The Congo who has a very different situation and didn't come over here with his parents, and he found it very difficult and was very traumatized...' '...you have to build a relationship with all the children because otherwise your class doesn't work, it's not a cohesive unit, it doesn't work...' '...I think even if, regardless of your background I think that because you have that experience of where you have worked you would share that idea, I think probably, I don't know, I imagine so...' '...because they're children, they might be very flexible kids, they might not be very flexible kids, depending on what kind of character they have got...' '...Well he was having to process the fact that he was in a different country, a different school, a classroom with different children who he probably not met children from that many places before...'

The School Family/ School Idyll

'...above all that they are loved and are wanted in the classroom, and they usually settle down quite quickly...'

'...we're lucky because we also have children that speak different languages as well, so you will probably find a child in your class that speaks their language, so that's the biggest thing really...'

'...I think that a lot of the time they don't have an EAL, we haven't got a Unit but there's a team of people who work, there is provision here which is really great...'

'...I think it is quite easy for children who are asylum seekers to feel accepted quite quickly here, because it's nothing new in this school, because in other parts of the city it would be something completely different, so it would be difficult for those people, but here it's just part of life...'

'...but the school is very supportive towards those children. It's our job to look after the children, so they will be looked after here...'

'...I think that maybe school would be a good place for people, for parents from other countries to be integrated into the community because it's a very neutral place isn't it...'

'...you have or parents evening, the majority of the time, it's always a positive experience for the teacher and the parents and the teacher and the kids together, it's never, in my experience it's always been positive...'

Peer Acceptance

'...the other children are always very tolerant of new children that arrive in their class whether they are children who can't speak English or they can, they are very used to it I think...'

'...whole of school is very supportive towards those children and especially the children themselves when a kid comes into the classroom they accept that child straight away... the kids feel that is their responsibility to take that person under their wing, and show them around the school and play with them...'

'…other children show them around the school and play with them...'

'...so there buddied up with a child in their class, they are taken round the school, they look after them at lunchtime...'

A Stressful New World

'...you take into consideration that it's a very different environment for them, and not just even the school, the city where they lived, the flat maybe that they live in, maybe they lived in a big house with a garden before, the poverty that they might be going through because it's a very different life...'

'...his family were such a tight unit, which you know I think they often are, you know you're in a different country and you've got to stick together a bit...'

'...I would say it's your responsibility as a teacher to introduce yourself to the parents and make sure you have some kind of contact with them...'

'...I would always make a point in having a conversation with their parents at the end of the day to make sure they were reassured that their child was ok, because for the parents it must be daunting themselves leaving their child...'

'...they have got the added stress of travelling to another country, sorting yourself out, getting a

doctor, getting money, you know, it's hard...'

Family Dis-connection/ Re-connection

'...I had a child in my class who was from Iraq and his dad came over first, his family were, he was still there in Iraq and then when his dad had saved enough money he brought the rest of the family over, but when his dad visited Iraq he didn't know who his dad was because he had left when he was very very young, so he didn't , that was his Dad, he tried to, in his words I think he tried to kick him because he was in his house but he was only very little at the time, (Both laugh) but when he found out that was his Dad...'

A Hostile External Community

'...I think that their experience of school would be extremely different from the local area, myself, because if a very safe place, the school is, it's got big gates around it, there's lots of greenery everywhere, it is a contrast to the area to the area that it's in...'

'...I think it would be really hard outside school for them...'

'...I don't think that anybody who doesn't live here, I don't any of the teachers would have a massive grasp on it because we don't live here...'

'...people are very quick to give their opinion about things like this when they don't know anything about it, which is very frustrating...'

'...it's underlying, it's sitting there, and there is no direction for that to go, I suppose...'

Personal Reference Points

'...I think that I am quite lucky because of my background, I don't find it very daunting I think that teachers sometimes find it very difficult...'

'...I kind of grew up with people from all over the world I was quite used to different cultures, different ways of speaking and I have taught English as a second language as a long time before I became a primary school teacher so that was quite normal for me...'

'...I think that it's very difficult to kind of develop to those expertise as it's a kind of life experience thing with kids like that I think...'

'...if I didn't work in the school I think that be because of my family I would be open to the fact that there were asylum seekers and refugees...'

'...that's my experience of asylum seeker children because I work here, but also it's not the same thing but my mum is Indian and she came here when she was 7 so I have a reference point...'

Personal and Professional identity

'...I think that teachers sometimes find it very difficult, the fact that the children don't speak any English and how am I going to support this child, and if you're not supporting that child in the way you are supporting everybody else, you are letting that child down a little bit...'

'...I think it very frustrating for teachers though especially when children don't speak English...'

'...I think that, I can't really take away my job from away my opinion, in that respect because I wouldn't have the opinions... and values... I have if I didn't work in this school...'

'...I think certain opinions and values, you can't really separate from your job...'

'...It's all to do with your context isn't it, because we work with children, the heart of that is that the child is themselves, so it would be wrong of us to label them in that respect...'

'...To decompartmentalise yourself, this is what I am in school and out of school, it doesn't really work does it when you work with kids...'

Rhetoric and Reality Gap

'...That's a big, it's not a problem, it's an issue in this school, because you have got a complete contrast of what the Government, what they look at in terms of data...'

T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Steep Learning Curve	Developing a Deeper Understanding	Community Tensions	Coping with Difficulties	The Front Line
Lacking Information	An Inclusive Setting	Outsiders	Children's Reactions	Complex backgrounds
The Resilient Teacher	School Leadership	An Inclusive School	A Learning Curve	Managing Tensions
Impact of Work on Personal Life	Language Acquisition	Teacher Pressures	Maximising Similarities	ASR Vulnerability
ASR Resilience	Personal Experience	Supportive Voices	Rejecting Labels	Managing Uncertainty
Fighting a Battle	Moral and Social Justice	ASR Strength	Homogeneity	Caring and Compassion

Teacher Frustrations	Systems Focussed	Parent and Teacher Relations	Personal Under-standing	Pupil Reactions
Cultural Differences	A Restrictive Environment	Community Engagement	Social Justice	Challenge of Inclusion
Community Difficulties	Challenging Work	My Own Story	The Right Support	Community Challenges
Powerful Role of the School	Trauma Discourses	Bullying	Building Bridges	Going the Extra Mile
The School Idyll			Community Bonds	Positive Outlook
Strong Leadership				

Appendix 9

Transcript 1: Analysis example demonstrating how the potential themes from the tapescript (Appendix 7) were linked together and translated into the emergent themes for Transcript 1 (Appendix 8)

Potential Themes (Transcript 1)	Emergent Themes
Societal negativity Hostile British society	**Negative British Society**
Challenging Teacher challenge Practical issues Negative impact of ASR Poor background information School based challenges Lack of information Practical difficulties Systemic frustrations Challenges and frustrations Teacher frustrations	**School-Based Challenges**
Vulnerability Compassion Resilience Empathy and understanding Presumed trauma Defensive of ASR children ASR positivity ASR children as individuals	**Empathetic Understanding**
The school family Positive school experience Positive school ethos and approach School idyll Primary school idyll School as a bounded community Protecting school identity Centrality of school community Parental engagement	**School Family/ School Idyll**
Peer relationships Environmental influences Peer acceptance Importance of peer support	**Peer Acceptance**
Stressful New World	**A Stressful New World**
Family Disconnection/Re-connection	**Family Disconnection/ Re-Connection**
Hostile community Teacher frustration Community difficulties Disconnected school/community relations	**A Hostile External Community**

|	
Teacher/community disconnect Hostility Negative community based perceptions	
Personal reference points	**Personal Reference Points**
Personal challenge Professional identity Personal investment Psychological expectations of self Moral and social responsibility Merging personal and professional identity Personal motivation Empathy- changing identity Teacher identity Maintaining professional boundaries Increased motivation Defensiveness/personal experience	**Personal and Professional Identity**
Rhetoric and reality gap	**Rhetoric and Reality**

Appendix 10

Overview showing how emergent themes from across the six transcripts were integrated to form sub-themes and over-arching themes.

Emergent Themes	Sub-Theme	Theme
Empathetic Understanding (T1) Trauma Discourses (T3) ASR Vulnerability (T6) Bullying (T4) Outsiders (T4)	ASR Vulnerability	Empathy and Understanding
ASR Resilience (T2) Managing Uncertainty (T6) ASR Strength (T4) Empathetic Understanding (T1)	ASR Strength and Resilience	
Personal Experience (T3) Personal Reference Points (T1) My Own Story (T4) Personal Understanding (T5) Empathetic Understanding (T1)	Personal Reference Points	
Going the Extra Mile (T6) Moral/Social justice (T3) Caring and Compassion (T6)	Going the Extra Mile	
School Family/School Idyll (T1) School Idyll (T2) Inclusive Setting (T3) An Inclusive School (T4) Powerful Role of School (T2) Strong Leadership (T2) Peer Acceptance (T1) Managing Tensions (T6) Children's Reactions (T5)	The School Context	Contextual

		Influences
Community Bonds (T5) Community Engagement (T4) Parent /Teacher Relations (T4) Building Bridges (T5) Community Challenges (T6) Community Difficulties (T2) A Hostile External Community (T1) Community Tensions (T4)	The Community Context	
A Steep Learning Curve (T2) Lacking Information (T2) Challenging Work (T3)	An Increasing Workload	A Personal and Professional Challenge
British Society (T1) Teacher Frustrations (T2) School Based Challenges (T1) Fighting the Battle (T2) Coping with Difficulties (T5) Teacher Pressures (T4) Personal and Professional Identity (T1) The Frontline (T6) Restrictive Environment (T3)	Concerns and Frustrations	
Personal and Professional Identity (T1)	Personal Implications	

Appendix 11: Public Domain briefing 1 (see guidelines)
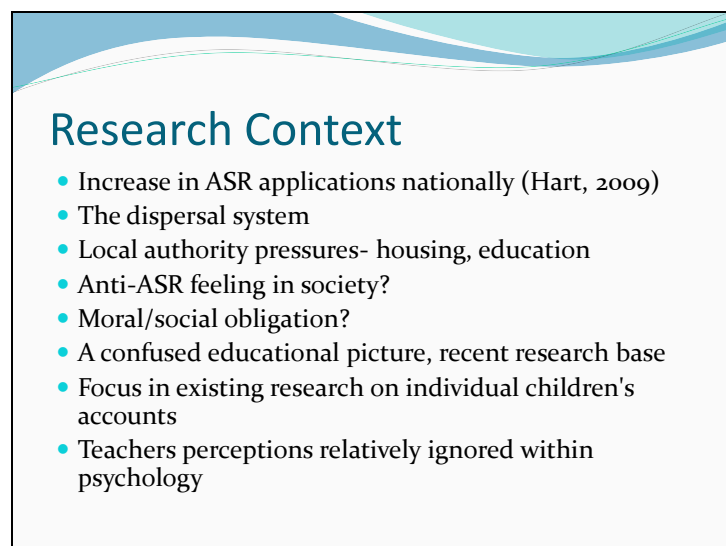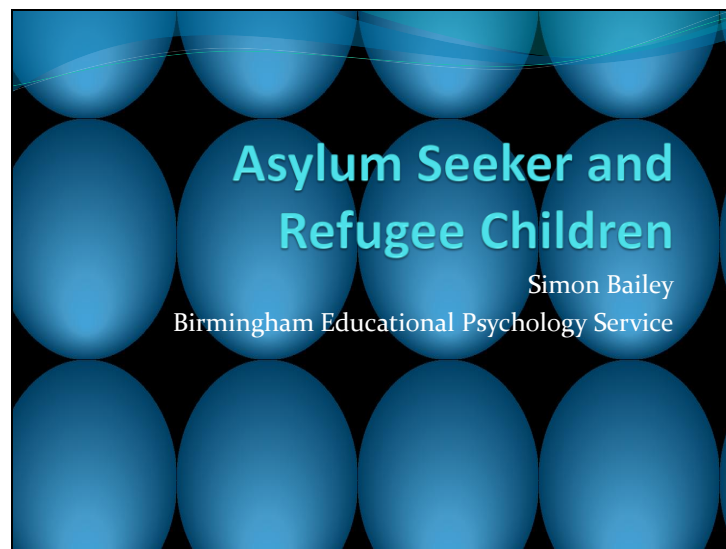
- The increase in ASR applications nationally in recent decades (Hart, 2009) and the system of dispersal (Appa, 2005), which has placed ASR people within towns and cities across the UK, has placed an increasing financial and resource pressures on Local Authority (LAs) services such as housing and education.
- This in turn has led to contrasting views within society regarding ASR people, ranging from those concerned at the perceived 'loss of Britishness' and the perception that Britain operates an 'open door' policy in regard to ASR people, and those concerned with social justice, who view Britain's role toward ASR as one of moral obligation towards those in need in refuge (Arnot et al., 2009).
- The slightly confused response to the arrival of ASR people in the UK is reflected within educational policy towards ASR where governmental rhetoric regarding legal rights and inclusion is set against, for example, a surprising lack of data regarding how many ASR children there actually are within schools in the UK (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

- The slow response towards ASR children from those concerned with education is reflected in the fact that the academic literature in relation to ASR children is relatively immature, and has only begun to fully emerge during the last 15 years.
- Previous research (Hek, 2005a) has tended to focus on directly eliciting the experiences of ASR pupils and attempting to understand what constitutes good practice when working alongside them. The nature of this research reflects the academic traditions from which it is conducted. For example sociological research has tended to focus upon structural and societal inequalities (Arnot and Pinson, 2005), whilst psychological research has traditionally focussed upon the emotional experiences of individual ASR pupils (Rutter, 2003). However I feel that the teachers' perspective has been relatively ignored.

Defining Terms

A refugee is someone who has gained refugee status under the 1951 UN convention relating to the status of refugees" (Hek, 2005, p2).

This may include "people with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" within their country of origin (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).

An asylum-seeker can be defined as:-

"...a person who applies to be recognised as a refugee under this definition. If successful they will be granted refugee status" (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).
...someone "who has crossed an international border in search of safety and applies to be given refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention" (Hek, 2005, p2).
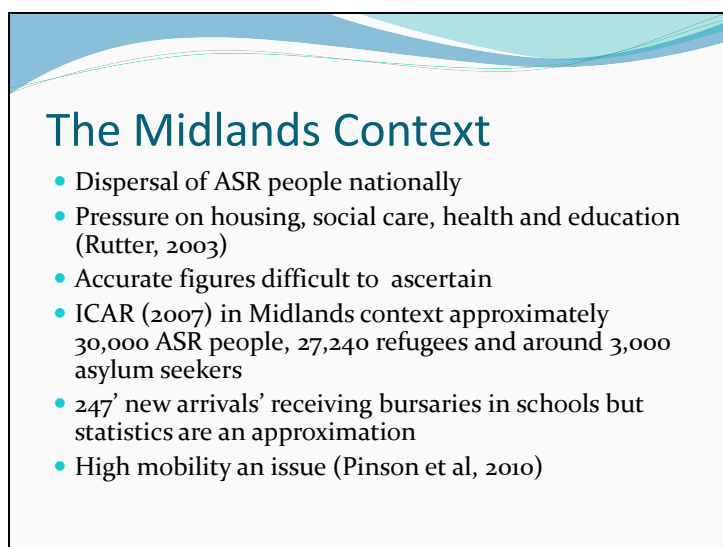
Within this study the terms asylum seeker and refugee (ASR) will be used collectively to refer to children and young people (or their parents) who have been granted discretionary leave to remain (German and Ehntholt, 2007), have recognised refugee status or have applied for asylum in the UK (Hek, 2005).

The Global Picture

- 20th Century- the century of the refugee (Schuster, 1998)
- Increasing numbers of ASR
- UNHCR 2009-10.5 million refugees/ 839,000 Asylum seekers applying for refugee status
- 80% hosted by developing countries
- Some variation in asylum numbers over last decade in UK, around 25,930 in 2009 (Home Office, 2009)

•Schuster (1998) argued that the 20th century could be regarded as the century of the refugee.
•Clearly "*being a refugee, fleeing persecution and seeking asylum was not a new phenomenon*" (Hart, 2009, p350), however the number of those seeking a safer existence increased substantially with the numerous conflicts and sites of political instability globally.

•According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2009) the number of people forcibly displaced stood at 42 million, with 80 percent from developing nations.
•Refugees make up around 10.5 million of these with a further 839,000 asylum seekers having applied for refugee status globally.
•Contrary to popular belief around 80% of these vulnerable people are hosted by developing countries with the remaining 20% spread throughout First and Second World nations.
•Within the UK the number of asylum applications has increased substantially over recent decades (Hart, 2009), although overall applications for asylum have more than halved since 1999. Last year however the number of applications for asylum (25,930) did rise slightly in comparison to preceding years (Home Office, 2009a)

The Midlands Context

- Dispersal of ASR people nationally
- Pressure on housing, social care, health and education (Rutter, 2003)
- Accurate figures difficult to ascertain
- ICAR (2007) in Midlands context approximately 30,000 ASR people, 27,240 refugees and around 3,000 asylum seekers
- 247' new arrivals' receiving bursaries in schools but statistics are an approximation
- High mobility an issue (Pinson et al, 2010)

- The general rise in asylum and refugee applications over recent decades has led to the introduction of a national dispersal system of ASR's across the UK. This was introduced following the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) and has been implemented through the creation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) (Appa, 2005). Whilst this has taken the pressure off local authorities (LAs) in the south-east of the UK it has presented LAs in other areas with distinct challenges, particularly in relation to housing, social care, health and education (Rutter, 2003)

- Accurate figures regarding asylum seekers and refugees can be difficult to ascertain, however the Information Centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugee's (ICAR, 2007) reports that in 2007, within the large Midlands local authority in which the present study is conducted, there were around 30,000 ASR people, of whom 27,240 were refugees and around 3,000 asylum seekers. The Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU, 2009) believe there were approximately 247 newly arrived children receiving bursaries in schools across this local authority in 2007, of whom around 25% might be considered ASR's. Overall there were estimated to be around 1000 unaccompanied minors (UASC) within the authority (ICAR, 2007). The lack of accurate statistics regarding the presence of ASR seems extraordinary, however high mobility within the ASR population can make accurate recording difficult (Pinson et al., 2010).

A Hostile Context

- Negative societal attention- resource pressures
- The ASR 'problem'- the need for control
- Loss of 'Britishness'??
- The political response- tighter immigration (BBC News 2010), restricting ability to access services (Arnot et al., 2009)
- Will this problem 'go away'? Moral/social responsibility?
- Hostile media discourses/ human psychology?

•During the last decade the arrival of ASR's in the UK has attracted significant societal attention, much of it negative, which has led to ASR immigration being perceived as a 'problem' that requires controlling (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). Significant concerns exist within parts of British society regarding immigration and the loss of the construct of 'Britishness' that some feel has occurred, alongside the perceived resource pressures their arrival has created, within for example housing and health (Finney, 2005).

•Attempts to limit the numbers of ASR's entering the country (Schuster, 2002), recently exemplified in the cap on non-EU migration proposed by the UK Government (BBC News, 2010a). ASR numbers are being limited through increasingly tighter admittance procedures and their entitlements and access to services, whilst in the UK, are also being restricted (Arnot et al., 2009).

•The century of the refugee to extend well into the 21st century, so the issue of ASR's, our treatment of them and their subsequent integration into society, becomes an ever more pressing issue to address.

•However asylum seekers and refugees are, as Arnot et al. (2009, p.249) argue, "...*physically and symbolically out of place, the others in our midst*" and can experience hostility and exclusion by wider society, particularly through the press who exert a powerful influence over public opinion (Patel and Mahtani, 2007). For example ASRs experience public stigmatisation by the press who appear to zealously highlight those who may be seeking asylum and claiming welfare benefits (Rutter, 2003).

•From a psychological perspective ASR people may fall victim to inter-group attribution errors, characterised by ethnocentrism or in-group bias, which may form the basis of stereotypes and prejudice (Hogg and Vaughan, 1998). A lack of interaction between the wider population and ASR people, and the lack of understanding that results, may only serve to reinforce this (Verkuyten, 2005).

•From a 'humane' perspective it appears to be 'morally just' to welcome ASR people to the country given the often traumatic backgrounds they hail from, alongside the richness in diversity and culture that they contribute to British society.

The Educational Context

- Legislative changes in relation to ASR people
- But where do children fit in?
- Contravening Rights if the Child legislation (UN, 1989)
- Role of education becomes ever more important
- Education supports integration into society (Ager and Strang, 2004)
- *"restores a sense of normalcy and hope" (McBrien, 2005, p332)*
- *Emotional support (German and Ehntholt, 2007) and cultural bereavement (Eisenbruch, 1991)*

•There has been a succession of legislative changes in regard to ASRs over the last twenty years within the UK (Rutter, 2003)

•However within this legislation there is a continued absence of consideration for the children of asylum seekers and refugees, and the impact of their experiences within the legal system.

•Rutter (2003) notes that the rights of these children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) may well be contravened, due to the government's lack of consideration regarding how legislation designed to discourage adult entry to the country impacts on children.

•The experiences of ASR children, prior to and on arrival in the UK, forms a challenging backdrop to the work of education professionals seeking to develop inclusive and welcoming environments which are largely at odds with the wider legislative and societal messages ASR children receive (Arnot et al., 2009).

•Education is an important strand in meeting the needs of ASR children, as it supports their integration into wider society (Ager and Strang, 2004).

•For ASR children attendance within school can be seen as a central means in which to '*restore a sense of normalcy and hope*' (McBrien, 2005, p332). Within the school context ASR children may experience, perhaps for the first time within the UK, a sense of consistency and emotional support (German and Ehntholt, 2007) that can help to support the personal and cultural bereavement that some ASR children may be experiencing (Eisenbruch, 1991).

Conceptualising ASR Needs

Local Authority's (LAs) conceptualise the needs of ASR children in differing ways :

- Adopting an 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) approach.
- Based around the concept of ethnic minority underachievement.
- Positioning ASR pupils as having Special Educational Needs (SEN); for example as pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), vulnerable children, at risk and requiring extensive support and guidance.
- New arrivals (admissions and induction emphasis).
- Race equality based around equal opportunities. For example teachers, parents and children involved in drafting school policy and action plans (Manyena and Brady, 2007)
- Holistic approaches which emphasise for example, the development of ecological resilience through the provision of support services and the creation of a positive can-do attitude towards the child, rather than a deficit model (Paton et al. 2000)

There is however no one exclusive approach, rather each authority/individual school may adopt several approaches simultaneously.

Holistic approaches (Colley, 2003) seek to focus upon the academic achievement of ASR pupils alongside interventions to support the child's well-being and their emotional, personal and social development (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). LAs and schools working holistically tend to value cultural diversity and actively promote and value the presence of ASR pupils within school. This kind of approach aims to create a positive image of ASR pupils where discourses which view ASR as problematic are resisted (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).
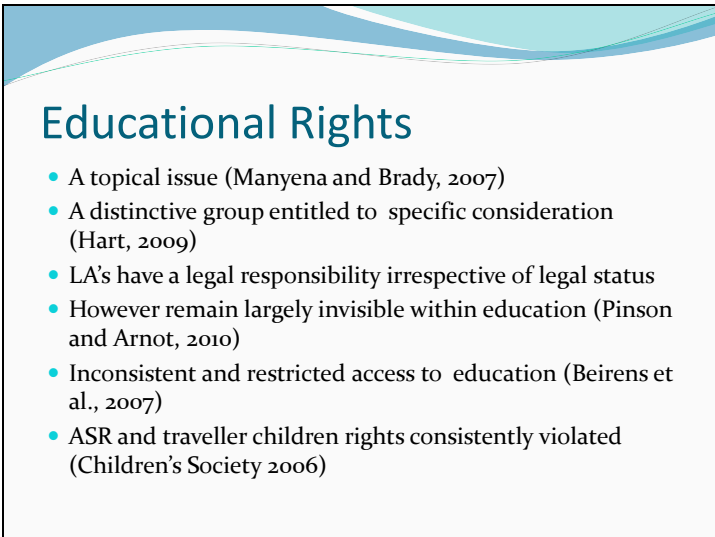
Vulnerability Discourses

- Holistic model rooted in vulnerability discourses
- Psychiatric difficulties, depression, anxiety allied to negative experiences in the UK
- Unaccompanied children most 'at risk'
- Impact of trauma on educational experiences
- Entering education stressful in itself for ASR children
- What about resilience discourses?
- Strong and well-protected adaptation systems (McEwan, 2007)
- An over-emphasis in psychology on vulnerability (Rutter, 2006) creates negative constructions of ASR children

•The holistic model proposed above is rooted in the belief that young refugees can be highly vulnerable and that their experiences in the UK may exacerbate this (Rutter, 2003).

ASR children are at increased risk of psychiatric difficulties (Rousseau, 1995) and around 40% of young refugees may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression or other anxiety-related difficulties (Hodes, 2000). These difficulties are often compounded by, for example, economic hardship and poor spoken English skills (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

•Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are perhaps amongst the most vulnerable to enter education in the UK (Morris, 2003).

•Impact of trauma on ASR children (Hart, 2009), significantly impact on their ability to learn and take part in 'normal' school life.

•Entering the education system can also be a significant source of stress as ASR pupils, particularly those with EAL, not only have to adjust to the culture of the school, but have to complete school work and develop relationships with peers and adults (Fumoto et al. 2007).

•Many ASR children and young people are highly resilient individuals who have the capability to overcome crisis whilst maintaining positive psychological functioning.

•Often resilient ASR pupils have strong and well-protected adaptation systems (McEwan, 2007) that have meant they can cope with difficult prior life experiences and assimilate challenging new experiences.

•Rutter (2006) notes that the vulnerability of ASR pupils, and trauma discourses, are often highlighted by psychological research and this may well influence the perceptions of practitioners working alongside them. For example teachers may consider ASR children to be fragile which creates and perpetuates a victim discourse regarding ASR. Rutter (2006) also notes that not all ASR children are vulnerable or traumatised and as practitioners we should not propagate constructions of ASR pupils as weak and vulnerable when each individual child, and their particular circumstance, will be unique.

•It is also important that individualising psychological discourses should not be used to construct ASR children as a problem within education (Boyden and Berry, 2004).
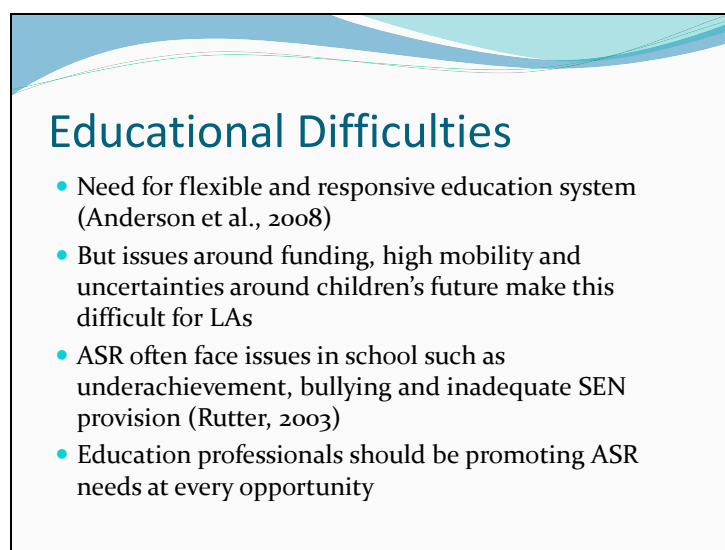
Educational Rights

- A topical issue (Manyena and Brady, 2007)
- A distinctive group entitled to specific consideration (Hart, 2009)
- LA's have a legal responsibility irrespective of legal status
- However remain largely invisible within education (Pinson and Arnot, 2010)
- Inconsistent and restricted access to education (Beirens et al., 2007)
- ASR and traveller children rights consistently violated (Children's Society 2006)

•The educational rights of ASR children have only recently become a topical issue due to their significant presence within schools in the UK (Manyena and Brady, 2007).

•The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that all children have the right to education, and that ASR children are a distinctive group entitled to specific consideration (Hart, 2009).
•Local Authorities (LAs) have a legal duty to ensure that education is available to all children of compulsory school age in their area, appropriate to age, abilities and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. This duty applies irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence in a particular location and therefore includes children from ASR backgrounds (UNESCO, 2010).
•However ASR pupils remain a largely invisible group within the wider education system due to the lack of specific legislation regarding their presence (Pinson and Arnot, 2010)
•Restricted and inconsistent access to education is likely to be a reality (Beirens et al., 2007).
•Furthermore the education system may be unfairly biased against vulnerable groups such as ASR pupils and their right to education can be consistently violated (Anderson et al., 2008). Indeed ASR and traveller children may be the most discriminated against groups within the school system (Children's Society, 2006).
•In a robust critique of Government policy the Children's Legal Centre (Anderson et al., 2008), an independent organisation concerned with children and young people's rights under law, state that ASR experience delays in access to education, placed in unsuitable schools with restricted curriculum access and receive inadequate funding
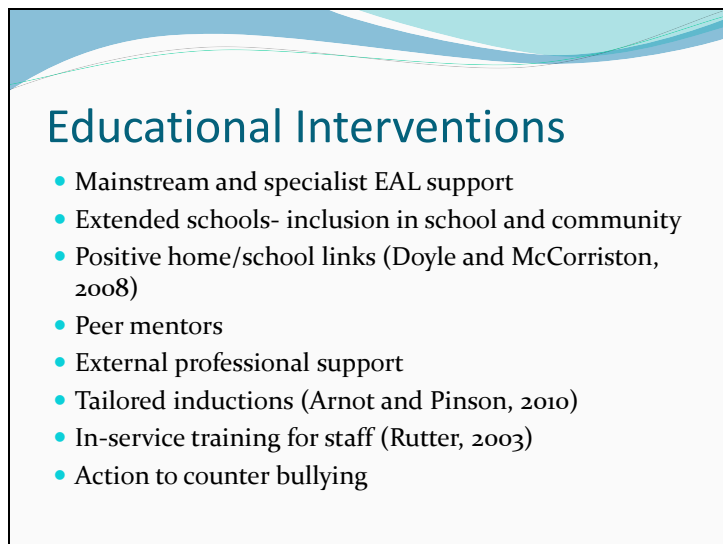
Educational Difficulties

- Need for flexible and responsive education system (Anderson et al., 2008)
- But issues around funding, high mobility and uncertainties around children's future make this difficult for LAs
- ASR often face issues in school such as underachievement, bullying and inadequate SEN provision (Rutter, 2003)
- Education professionals should be promoting ASR needs at every opportunity

The report reinforces the need for a sensitive and responsive education system that meets the needs of ASR children. ASR families often place a high value on education yet express concerns that the inflexibility of the education system restricts their children's access to education (Manyena and Brady, 2007). However providing education for ASR pupils can cause difficulties for Local Authorities given funding formulas and the uncertainties surrounding individual children's futures within the UK, coupled with issues around high mobility (Arnot et al., 2009).

ASR pupils face many issues within school systems such as underachievement, bullying and inadequate SEN provision (Rutter, 2003) and the need for structural change within schools should be supported by substantive and meaningful legislative

changes. These challenges however should not prevent those concerned with improving education focussing on how we can better meet ASR pupil's needs. Indeed given these concerns education professionals should be conscious to champion their needs at every opportunity.

Educational Interventions

- Mainstream and specialist EAL support
- Extended schools- inclusion in school and community
- Positive home/school links (Doyle and McCorriston, 2008)
- Peer mentors
- External professional support
- Tailored inductions (Arnot and Pinson, 2010)
- In-service training for staff (Rutter, 2003)
- Action to counter bullying

•Mainstream and specialist provision to support those pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Support for home language development
•Extended schools. Extra-curricular clubs can be crucial to the education and inclusion of ASR pupils into school and the wider community (Smyth, 2006).
•Good home/school links. Poor home/school communication may often be a barrier to the development of positive relationships; in particular where ASR parents feel they cannot approach schools (Manyena and Brady, 2007). Nurturing school environments are often the result of sustained community/school partnerships (Doyle and McCorriston, 2008).
Peer mentors. Alongside this an identified member of staff in the school who has responsibility for refugee children and access to information about refugee children can be invaluable for pupils and staff alike (Rutter, 2003).
•Good relations with support agencies to provide psycho-social support for refugee children who are not coping as a result of their past and present experiences (Rutter, 2003).
•Tailored inductions that foster a sense of social inclusion (Arnot and Pinson, 2010).
•In-service training on meeting the needs of ASR pupils is essential (Rutter, 2003). Indeed compulsory training in schools should sensitise staff to the experiences of ASR pupils and reduce negative stereotyping and the low expectations some staff may have about children (Anderson et al., 2008).
•Action should be taken to counter hostility and the racist bullying of refugees. This may comprise links with other organisations such as Race Equality Councils and community groups. School also need effective sanctions against racist bullying and to use the curriculum to promote ethnic diversity as positive (Rutter, 2003).

Local Authority Best Practice

- Targeted ring-fenced funding
- Guidelines for community transition with suitable educational provision identified
- Accurate data collection re: ASR pupils
- Timelines for educational placements (Appa, 2005)

(Source: Anderson et al., 2008)

•Targeted ring-fenced funding for ASR pupils. Central government emphasis is on LA responsibility for ASR children and although funding is available through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) and the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG), neither is designed to meet the often complex needs of ASR pupils (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). EMAG funding for example is once yearly and is relatively inflexible
•Guidelines should be in place to support the transition of ASR children into community settings under the dispersal policy, ensuring they are placed in areas with suitable educational provision;
•Data should be maintained to monitor outcomes for ASR children;
•Local authorities should be given timelines for making educational placements for refugee and asylum seeking children. For example the arrival of ASR pupils in school mid-term are common, and it often takes weeks/months to find a placement for them (Appa, 2005).
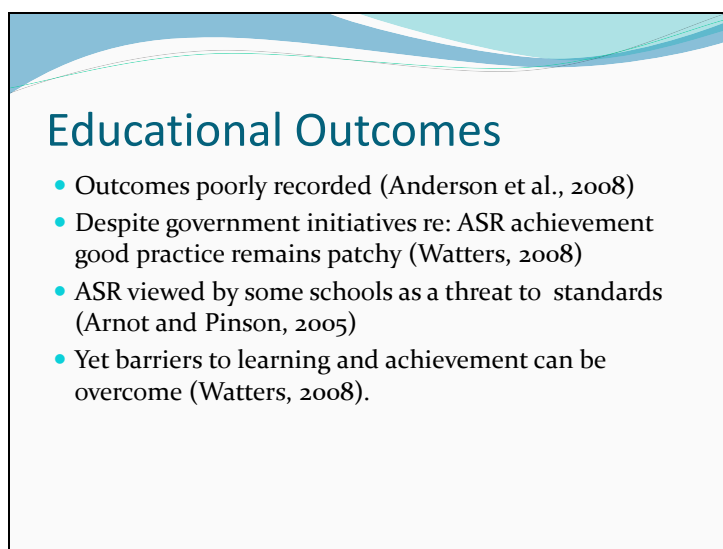
Educational Experiences

- Ofsted (2003)- provision good for ASR children somewhat at odds with Anderson et al. (2008)
- Praise for teacher efforts to include
- Good use of EMAG funding- yet this has been cut (2010)
- However class teachers in some contexts struggling
- Lack of training over 'psychological trauma'
- Lack of basic knowledge of linguistic, cultural and educational experiences of ASR children

•Ofsted (2003)- Overall the report suggested that provision was rated good for asylum seeking children, which is at odds with the more recent report by Anderson et al. (2008) discussed earlier.

•However it does give schools and individual teachers praise for their efforts and notes that some schools have to commit significant time and resources on integrating ASR pupils.

•The report highlights the use of EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) staff to support ASR pupils in schools however during consultation with staff in the local authority in which this research was conducted (November 2009) it emerged that funding for the Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (funded by EMAG) is being cut in 2010.

•The report identified a number of schools where class teachers were struggling to meet the learning needs of ASR pupils and a lack of school training in identifying psychological trauma and basic knowledge about was highlighted.

Educational Outcomes

- Outcomes poorly recorded (Anderson et al., 2008)
- Despite government initiatives re: ASR achievement good practice remains patchy (Watters, 2008)
- ASR viewed by some schools as a threat to standards (Arnot and Pinson, 2005)
- Yet barriers to learning and achievement can be overcome (Watters, 2008).

•Given the lack of data regarding ASR pupils LAs tend to hold it is unsurprising that educational outcomes for this group are poorly recorded (Anderson et al. 2008).

•There are a wide variety of central and local governmental initiatives to improve the academic achievement of ASR pupils however good practice remains patchy (Watters, 2008).

•The presence of ASR pupils within schools may be viewed within some school contexts as a threat to standards, although ASR pupils are only included in league table data following two years of residency within the UK (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

•In general, with suitable and appropriate intervention, barriers to learning and achievement can be overcome (Watters, 2008). ASR children tend to progress better in primary schools, where most make good progress, particularly in Mathematics (Ofsted, 2003).

Teachers Experiences

- Arrival of ASR often viewed positively (Whiteman, 2009)
- May doubt their ability to meet needs (Pinson and Arnot, 2007)
- Psychological impact on teachers (Arnot et al., 2009)
- Compassion and 'humanism' (Arnot et al., 2009)
- Contradictory emotions; anger, frustration, sadness and confusion (Children's Society, 2006).
- Professionally challenged (Day et al., 2006)

•The arrival of ASR pupils within school is often viewed positively by teachers (Whiteman, 2009) as many are seen as having much to offer within the school context, although teachers themselves may doubt their ability to meet the child's needs (Pinson and Arnot, 2007).
•Presence may have a significant psychological impact upon those teachers (Arnot et al., 2009).
•Compassion and humanism of teachers- can we generalise to all teachers?

The presence of ASR children can induce a wide variety of contradictory emotions, ranging from anger, frustration, sadness and confusion (Children's Society, 2006). Teachers may be professionally challenged by the presence of ASR children within the classroom, a vital factor because for many teachers their relationship with their pupils is often central to their motivation and commitment to the job (Day et al. 2006).

Teachers Experiences

- Meeting the needs of all children can be difficult
- Vulnerability discourses dominate (Bash, 2005)
- Lack of skills to work with traumatised children (German and Ehntholt, 2007)
- Deficit assumptions about ASR academic abilities (Devine, 2005)
- Lack of understanding re: ASR experiences
- Role of personal values and norms (Abbas, 2002)
- Poor ITT training (Butcher et al., 2007)
- Lack of background information

•The presence of ASR children alongside other pupils with often specific needs can be a difficulty.
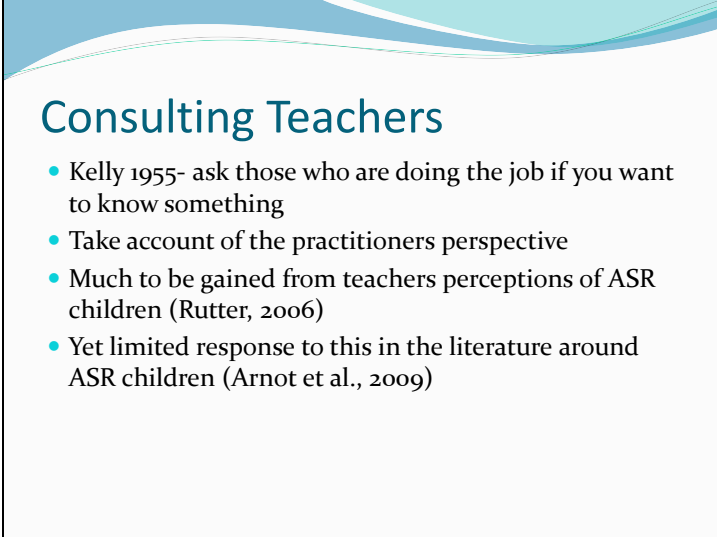
•In addition westernised discourses of child development may lead some professionals to question the resilience of ASR pupils and doubt their ability to cope within school (Bash, 2005), alongside a sense that they themselves as professionals may lack the skills to work with, what they may consider to be, traumatised ASR children (German and Ehntholt, 2007).
•Linked to this negative discourse regarding ASR children is research which has suggested that teachers may, in some circumstances, hold a deficit assumption about the academic ability of the ASR children with which they work (Devine, 2005).
•This can be reinforced by a lack of understanding regarding the refugee experience in schools and the overwhelming stress of immigration status.
•The views of teachers regarding ASR are often based on their own personal values and norms and may lead them to form a perception of others through a process of characterisation (Abbas, 2002), which can be either positively or negatively skewed.
•Indeed there is an apparent inadequacy within the initial teaching training programme in relation to ASR children, where trainee teachers may, at best, gain an awareness of ASR pupils needs rather than any practical competence (Butcher et al., 2007).
•The arrival of ASR pupils may create specific difficulties for teachers who are faced with pupils for whom they have no prior information or knowledge regarding previous schooling, and ASR pupils who have little knowledge of the school system (Appa, 2005).

EPs Response... The story so far

- Relative absence in ASR literature to date
- A challenging group for psychologists to work with? (Tribe and Patel, 2007)
- Staff teams with designated members of staff with responsibility for ASR children (DfES, 2004)
- EP skills under-used
- Skilling up of teachers (Hulusi, 2009)
- Much that all psychologists have to offer ASR pupils, schools and families (German and Ehntholt, 2007)
- Teacher feedback a good starting point

•Relative absence of the profession within the academic and professional literature surrounding ASR pupils (Pinson et al. 2010; Boyden, 2009).
•Educational psychology teams should have staff with designated responsibility for ASR (DfES, 2004).
•ASR's however are often perceived as a challenging group that are difficult for psychologists to work alongside (Tribe and Patel, 2007).
•Despite this the relative invisibility of educational psychology is surprising given the discourses surrounding individual ASR pupils and their 'psychological vulnerability', where a clear role for the psychological knowledge, interests and skill-base of many EPs could probably be well-utilised.

•In reality there is a clear need for the development of the skill base of staff working with ASR pupils (DfES, 2004) and EPs may well view the 'skilling up' of teachers as central to their role (Hulusi, 2009).

•There is much that EPs could do in terms of raising ASR pupils in the educational context, supporting their needs and facilitating their genuine inclusion. In my opinion there is a need to develop the profession's understanding of ASR children's experiences in schools based on feedback from those who work directly alongside them.

Consulting Teachers

- Kelly 1955- ask those who are doing the job if you want to know something
- Take account of the practitioners perspective
- Much to be gained from teachers perceptions of ASR children (Rutter, 2006)
- Yet limited response to this in the literature around ASR children (Arnot et al., 2009)

•George Kelly noted that "*if you want to know what is going on, it is always sensible to ask the people who are doing the work themselves*" (Kelly, 1955, in Reid 2006, p.2)*.*

•It is clear that research in education should be concerned with taking account of the practitioner's perspective (National Teacher Research Panel, 2007)*,* and there is much to be gained from the study of teachers perceptions of ASR children (Rutter, 2006).

•Given that there is a substantial academic history of gathering teacher's views and perceptions (Bash, 2005), it is somewhat surprising that there is, at present, a limited literature in respect to teachers response to the presence of ASR pupils within their classroom (Arnot et al., 2009; Children's Society, 2006; Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

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Taking up the Challenge: Teachers Perceptions of Asylum Seeker and Refugee Pupils

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Defining Terms

A refugee is someone who has gained refugee status under the 1951 UN convention relating to the status of refugees" (Hek, 2005, p2).

This may include *"people with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion"* within their country of origin (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).

An asylum-seeker can be defined as:-

"...a person who applies to be recognised as a refugee under this definition. If successful they will be granted refugee status" (Pourgourides, 2007, p.56).

...someone *"who has crossed an international border in search of safety and applies to be given refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention"* (Hek, 2005, p2).

Within this study the terms asylum seeker and refugee (ASR) will be used collectively to refer to children and young people (or their parents) who have been granted discretionary leave to remain (German and Ehntholt, 2007), have recognised refugee status or have applied for asylum in the UK (Hek, 2005).

Global/Local Context

- 2oth Century– the century of the refugee (Schuster, 1998)
- UNHCR 2009–10.5 million refugees/ 839,000 Asylum seekers applying for refugee status
- Some variation in asylum numbers over last decade in UK, around 25,930 in 2009 (Home Office, 2009)
- Dispersal system– national challenges
- Midlands– 27,240 refugees, 3,000 asylum seekers (ICAR, 2007)
- A hostile context?

•Schuster (1998) 20th century the century of the refugee.

•Those seeking a safer existence increased substantially with the numerous conflicts and sites of political instability globally.

•According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2009) the number of people forcibly displaced stood at 42 million, with 80 percent from developing nations.

•Refugees make up around 10.5 million of these with a further 839,000 asylum seekers having applied for refugee status globally.

•Within the UK the number of asylum applications has increased substantially over recent decades (Hart, 2009), although overall applications for asylum have more than halved since 1999. Last year however the number of applications for asylum (25,930) did rise slightly in comparison to preceding years (Home Office, 2009a).

•The general rise in asylum and refugee applications over recent decades has led to the introduction of a national dispersal system of ASR's across the UK. Whilst this has taken the pressure off local authorities (LAs) in the south-east of the UK it has presented LAs in other areas with distinct challenges, particularly in relation to housing, social care, health and education (Rutter, 2003)

•Accurate figures regarding asylum seekers and refugees can be difficult to ascertain, however the Information Centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugee's (ICAR, 2007) reports that in 2007, within the large Midlands local authority in which the present study is conducted, there were around 30,000 ASR people, of whom 27,240 were refugees and around 3,000 asylum seekers. The Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU, 2009) believe there were approximately 247 newly arrived children receiving bursaries in schools across this local authority in 2007, of whom around 25% might be considered ASR's.

ASR Children in Education

▸ Educational Context– "*can restore a sense of normalcy and hope*" (McBrien, 2005, p332

▸ LA Conceptualising Needs– EAL, Ethnic Minority Underachievement, SEN (SEBD), New Arrivals, Race Equality, Holistic approaches

▸ Vulnerability Discourses– prevalent in education, trauma, depression

▸ But what about resilience?

•A succession of legislative changes in regard to ASRs over the last twenty years within the UK (Rutter, 2003)

•However a continued absence of consideration for the children of asylum seekers and refugees, and the impact of their experiences within the legal system.

•Rutter (2003) notes that the rights of these children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) may well be contravened, due to the government's lack of

consideration regarding how legislation designed to discourage adult entry to the country impacts on children.

•Education is an important strand in meeting the needs of ASR children, as it supports their integration into wider society (Ager and Strang, 2004).

•For ASR children attendance within school can be seen as a central means in which to '*restore a sense of normalcy and hope*' (McBrien, 2005, p332).

Conceptualising Needs

•There is however no one exclusive approach, rather each authority/individual school may adopt several approaches simultaneously.

•Holistic approaches (Colley, 2003) seek to focus upon the academic achievement of ASR pupils alongside interventions to support the child's well-being and their emotional, personal and social development (Pinson and Arnot, 2010). LAs and schools working holistically tend to value cultural diversity and actively promote and value the presence of ASR pupils within school. This kind of approach aims to create a positive image of ASR pupils where discourses which view ASR as problematic are resisted (Pinson and Arnot, 2010).

•Holistic model proposed above is rooted in the belief that young refugees can be highly vulnerable and that their experiences in the UK may exacerbate this (Rutter, 2003).

•ASR children are at increased risk of psychiatric difficulties (Rousseau, 1995) and around 40% of young refugees may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression or other anxiety-related difficulties (Hodes, 2000). These difficulties are often compounded by, for example, economic hardship and poor spoken English skills (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

•Impact of trauma on ASR children (Hart, 2009), significantly impact on their ability to learn and take part in 'normal' school life.

•Entering the education system can also be a significant source of stress as ASR pupils, particularly those with EAL, not only have to adjust to the culture of the school, but have to complete school work and develop relationships with peers and adults (Fumoto et al. 2007).

•Many ASR children and young people are highly resilient individuals who have the capability to overcome crisis whilst maintaining positive psychological functioning.

•Often resilient ASR pupils have strong and well-protected adaptation systems (McEwan, 2007) that have meant they can cope with difficult prior life experiences and assimilate challenging new experiences.

•Rutter (2006) notes that the vulnerability of ASR pupils, and trauma discourses, are often highlighted by psychological research and this may well influence the perceptions of practitioners working alongside them.

•It is also important that individualising psychological discourses should not be used to construct ASR children as a problem within education (Boyden and Berry, 2004).

ASR Children in Education

- Educational Rights– distinctive group entitled to specific support yet largely invisible in education
- Education Difficulties– underachievement and bullying often a reality
- Educational Interventions– EAL support, extended schools, positive home/school links, peer mentors, tailored inductions, in-service training for staff
- Education Experiences– Ofsted (2003) good provision for ASR, teachers praised
- Educational Outcomes– patchy practice, outcomes poorly recorded

•The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that ASR children are a distinctive group entitled to specific consideration (Hart, 2009).

•Local Authorities (LAs) have a legal duty to ensure that education is available to all children irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence (UNESCO, 2010).

•However ASR pupils remain a largely invisible group within the wider education system (Pinson and Arnot, 2010)

•Restricted and inconsistent access to education is likely to be a reality (Beirens et al., 2007).

•ASR experience delays in access to education, placed in unsuitable schools with restricted curriculum access and receive inadequate funding (Anderson et al., 2008)

•However providing education for ASR pupils can cause difficulties for Local Authorities given funding formulas and the uncertainties surrounding individual children's futures within the UK, coupled with issues around high mobility (Arnot et al., 2009).

•Mainstream and specialist provision to support those pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Support for home language development

•Extended schools. Extra-curricular clubs can be crucial to the education and inclusion of ASR pupils into school and the wider community (Smyth, 2006).

•Good home/school links. Poor home/school communication may often be a barrier to the development of positive relationships; in particular where ASR parents feel they cannot approach schools (Manyena and Brady, 2007). Nurturing school environments are often the result of sustained community/school partnerships (Doyle and McCorriston, 2008).

•Peer mentors. Alongside this an identified member of staff in the school who has responsibility for refugee children and access to information about refugee children can be invaluable for pupils and staff alike (Rutter, 2003).

•Good relations with support agencies to provide psycho-social support for refugee children who are not coping as a result of their past and present experiences (Rutter, 2003).

•Tailored inductions that foster a sense of social inclusion (Arnot and Pinson, 2010).

•In-service training on meeting the needs of ASR pupils is essential (Rutter, 2003). Indeed compulsory training in schools should sensitise staff to the experiences of ASR pupils and reduce negative stereotyping and the low expectations some staff may have about children (Anderson et al., 2008).

•Action should be taken to counter hostility and the racist bullying of refugees. This may comprise links with other organisations such as Race Equality Councils and community groups. School also need effective sanctions against racist bullying and to use the curriculum to promote ethnic diversity as positive (Rutter, 2003).

•Ofsted (2003)- Overall provision was rated good for asylum seeking children
•Gave schools and individual teachers praise for their effort.
•The report identified a number of schools where class teachers were struggling to meet the learning needs of ASR pupils and a lack of school training in identifying psychological trauma and basic knowledge about was highlighted.

•Educational outcomes for this group are poorly recorded (Anderson et al. 2008).
•There are a wide variety of central and local governmental initiatives to improve the academic achievement of ASR pupils however good practice remains patchy (Watters, 2008).
•The presence of ASR pupils within schools may be viewed within some school contexts as a threat to standards, although ASR pupils are only included in league table data following two years of residency within the UK (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).
•In general, with suitable and appropriate intervention, barriers to learning and achievement can be overcome (Watters, 2008). ASR children tend to progress better in primary schools, where most make good progress, particularly in Mathematics (Ofsted, 2003).

Teachers Experiences

- Arrival of ASR often viewed positively (Whiteman, 2009) but doubt their ability to meet needs (Pinson and Arnot, 2007)
- Psychological impact on teachers (Arnot et al., 2009), contradictory emotions; anger, frustration, sadness and confusion (Children's Society, 2006).
- Compassion and 'humanism' (Arnot et al., 2009)
- Professionally challenged (Day et al., 2006)
- Poor training/lack of understanding of ASR experiences
- Lack of information about ASR children

•The arrival of ASR pupils within school is often viewed positively by teachers (Whiteman, 2009) as many are seen as having much to offer within the school context, although teachers themselves may doubt their ability to meet the child's needs (Pinson and Arnot, 2007).

•Presence may have a significant psychological impact upon those teachers (Arnot et al., 2009).

•Compassion and humanism of teachers- can we generalise to all teachers?

•The presence of ASR children can induce a wide variety of contradictory emotions, ranging from anger, frustration, sadness and confusion (Children's Society, 2006). Teachers may be professionally challenged by the presence of ASR children within the classroom, a vital factor because for many teachers their relationship with their pupils is often central to their motivation and commitment to the job (Day et al. 2006).

•The arrival of ASR pupils may create specific difficulties for teachers who are faced with pupils for whom they have no prior information or knowledge regarding previous schooling, and ASR pupils who have little knowledge of the school system (Appa, 2005).

EPs response...so far

▸ Relative absence in ASR literature to date
▸ A challenging group for psychologists to work with? (Tribe and Patel, 2007)
▸ Staff teams with designated members of staff with responsibility for ASR children (DfES, 2004)
▸ EP skills under-used
▸ Skilling up of teachers (Hulusi, 2009)
▸ Much that all psychologists have to offer ASR pupils, schools and families (German and Ehntholt, 2007)
▸ Teacher feedback a good starting point

•Relative absence of the profession within the academic and professional literature surrounding ASR pupils (Pinson et al. 2010; Boyden, 2009).

•Educational psychology teams should have staff with designated responsibility for ASR (DfES, 2004).

•ASR's however are often perceived as a challenging group that are difficult for psychologists to work alongside (Tribe and Patel, 2007).

•Despite this the relative invisibility of educational psychology is surprising given the discourses surrounding individual ASR pupils and their 'psychological vulnerability', where a clear role for the psychological knowledge, interests and skill-base of many EPs could probably be well-utilised.

•In reality there is a clear need for the development of the skill base of staff working with ASR pupils (DfES, 2004) and EPs may well view the 'skilling up' of teachers as central to their role (Hulusi, 2009).

•There is much that EPs could do in terms of raising ASR pupils in the educational context, supporting their needs and facilitating their genuine inclusion. In my opinion there is a need to develop the profession's understanding of ASR children's experiences in schools based on feedback from those who work directly alongside them.

Rationale/ Aims of the Study

- Kelly 1955- ask those who are doing the job if you want to know something
- Take account of the practitioners perspective
- Much to be gained from teachers perceptions of ASR children (Rutter, 2006)
- Yet limited response to this in the literature around ASR children (Arnot et al., 2009)
- Perceptions of teachers regarding the presence of ASR children in school
- Individual pupils, classroom impact, school-based issues, community interactions

•Primary focus is to examine the way in which teachers perceive and conceptualise the presence of Asylum Seeker and Refugee (ASR) pupils in school.

•Focus on the perceptions of the teachers in relation to the wider ASR pupil group and their perceptions of some of the individual ASR children they have worked with. I will also focus on classroom issues related to the inclusion of ASR pupils and the perceived impact on teachers' professional practice. I also hope to explore their perceptions regarding the presence of ASR pupils in relation to the wider school systems and the wider community contexts that those schools are situated within.

Methodology

- Qualitative methodology- small scale research in real world setting
- Rejecting grand narratives, focus on individual accounts
- Reality is highly subjective
- Require an interpretive approach
- Phenomenological approach- what matters to individuals in their own worlds, their perspective in relation to a particular phenomena

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

‣ Experiential approach to research
‣ Studies how people make sense of their every day personal and social worlds
‣ IPA conceptualises the individual as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being, connecting the things people say with their thoughts and emotional responses (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

Research Questions

‣ What are the teachers' perceptions of the individual ASR children they have worked with?
‣ How do teachers perceive the interactions and relationships ASR children have with others in their classrooms and within the wider school?
‣ What are teachers' views of the inter-connections between the school and community that an ASR child resides within?
‣ What are the teachers' perceptions of factors which indirectly influence the life of an ASR child within the school context?

Research Context

‣ Context- three schools in context
‣ Sample- 7 teachers
‣ Ethics- BERA, BPS, HPC
‣ Data Collection- Semi-structured interviews
‣ Data Analysis- IPA process
‣ Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Studies
‣ Reflexivity- critical self-awareness
‣ The Researchers Position- little prior knowledge of ASR but concerns expressed by teachers during work as TEP

•Three schools within the local authority with high ASR populations
•Six teachers experienced at working alongside ASR pupils
•An ethical approach underpinned by guidance from BERA, BPS and HPC
•Data collection- semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions
•Data Analysis- IPA successive readings of transcripts of the interviews, initial themes noted, themes between interviews identified
•Validity and Reliability- IPA uses standardised data collection and analysis procedures, familiarity with the transcripts, clear research process, co-checking of data and links to existing literature
•Reflexivity- an emphasis on critical self-awareness and the way in which the researchers own values, experiences, interests, assumptions and preconceptions are likely to influence the collection and interpretation of qualitative data, and to recognise the impossibility of maintaining an objective stance to the subject matter (Willig, 2001).

Findings

Following initial reading of the transcripts initial impressions were noted.

‣ T1 Defensiveness re: ASR pupils
‣ T2 The primary school idyll
‣ T3 Systemic pressures/external frustrations
‣ T4 The bullying of ASR pupils
‣ T5 Equality and bridge building
‣ T6 Complex individual ASR histories

•T1 adopted a defensive stance/protective towards the ASR children she had worked with
•T2 perceived their school as a primary school idyll, protective and secure in opposition to the dangerous community outside the school gates.
•T3 discussed the external pressures facing schools
•T5 Building bridges within the local community appeared to be a key focus
•T6 focussed on individual accounts of specific ASR children she had worked with.

Specific Themes

Themes and related sub-themes

1) Empathy and Understanding– ASR Vulnerability, ASR Strength and Resilience, Personal Reference Points and Going the Extra Mile
2) Contextual Influences– The School Context and The Community Context
3) A Personal and Professional Challenge– An Increasing Workload, Concerns and Frustrations and Personal and Professional identity

Following the initial reading further in-depth analysis was conducted. Emergent themes were mapped and compared with themes in other accounts. These were then drawn together to form overarching themes that sought to capture the complexity of the accounts within one clear narrative.

Impact of experiences prior to entering the profession a key factor in how ASR children were perceived. Psychological impact, increased motivation, doing that little bit more for ASR children.

Contextual Influences

•School Context- peer support an emphasis from non-ASR pupils, protective school environment, protective teachers, positive school ethos and the role of strong leadership. However bullying can still be a significant issue for some. Furthermore the daily battle to support ASR pupils alongside others with significant needs was seen to grind some teachers down. The attitudes of some in the wider staff team towards ASR children can also be an issue
•Community Context- challenging, hostile at times in some contexts, disconnected from the school context. However others perceived that the school has an important role to play in community relations

Personal and Professional Challenge

•Presence of ASR children means teachers have to work harder differentiating, teaching is highly challenging with many frustrations. For example personal concerns included factors such as letting the child down or not doing enough to support them. The pressure on teachers discussed and it was noted that concerns and frustrations should not be passed onto the child.
Systemic factors were also a source of frustration such as Ofsted, lack of information about ASR pupils, the ripple effect across the school of high mobility. Also frustration expressed at wider society and way in which contact had allowed her to better understand the needs and experiences of ASR children and their families

Discussion

Teachers Perceptions of individual children?
- Caring, compassion and empathy for vulnerable pupils
- But resilience of ASR pupils expressed strongly
- Need for a more positive psychological interpretation- not a denial of trauma but focus upon hope, competency, positivity, responsibility and perseverance (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

For Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) a focus upon hope, competency, positivity, responsibility and perseverance are some of the many components of a more positive and optimistic outlook on human existence

Discussion

ASR relationships in the classroom and wider school?
- Importance of peer support for ASR children and their teachers. Implies that process of how peer support is implemented in school should be more focussed and structured perhaps
- The need for vigilance towards bullying
- The power of school ethos and strong leadership

Peer Support

•Primary schools nationally are increasingly using peer mentoring and peer support programmes to provide practical and psychological support for all pupils who may be vulnerable or require additional support (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011). For ASR pupils peer support tends to take the form of formalised buddying schemes or attempts by school staff to develop friendship building activities within class, break times or after school (Home Office, 2011b). However for ASR children who may be experiencing specific difficulties settling into school a more individualised mentoring relationship could perhaps be beneficial. I would argue that in areas of high ASR populations a formal peer mentoring or support programme should be an important feature of the school's approach to supporting ASR children. Formalised approaches to supporting ASR children in school are increasingly being developed

(Bell, 2009) and provide a good fit with policy and initiatives such as Every Child Matters (DCSF, 2004a) and Healthy Schools (DfE, 2010a).

Discussion

School and Community Relations
- Achieving positive school/community links seen to be important but challenging
- Importance of staff who have ties to the local community
- Central role of school in 'forcing' communities together
- Adults around ASR children may need the most support

•School settings often lie, physically and psychologically, within the heart of their local community. Schools could be well placed to play a crucial role in seeking to shape structural community-based change given the will to do so, appropriate training, ongoing support and the necessary funding and resources. With a shift in focus school settings are in a position to offer the social support that many ASR people need. This is not to suggest that teachers should become social workers but merely to raise the notion that schools and other support services could play a much broader role in supporting ASR children and their families in areas where there are high populations of that community.

Discussion

Wider contextual influences
- Need for schools to take responsibilities towards ASR children seriously
- Experienced staff team important
- Staff specific to ASR pupils– trained
- Teacher stress generally– the importance of social support within the school
- The Ofsted process and the de-motivating impact on teacher morale in schools with high ASR populations

Implications for EPs

▸ Disseminating research evidence more widely within schools
▸ Promoting ASR children as a distinct group
▸ Developing information gathering tools
▸ Therapeutic work
▸ Promoting positive psychology
▸ Supporting schools in developing community psychology intervention

Implications for EPs

▸ Developing and supporting implementation of peer mentoring programmes- developing the evidence base and improving practice
▸ Linking school communities to share information e.g. cluster level problem solving, resource sharing groups
▸ Providing training to schools on ASR needs
▸ Training for new teachers on ITT?

Limitations and Future Directions

▸ Representative sample?
▸ True accounts from the participants?
▸ The use of other more suitable approaches- survey perhaps?
▸ Different teacher populations
▸ Different school contexts
▸ Action research in school assessing the implementation of the evidence base
▸ Community psychology approach

Conclusion

- Findings broadly in line with the existing research in the field.
- Challenges faced by teachers
- Resilience of ASR pupils
- Importance of peer relationships
- School ethos
- Creating home/school links (wider community)
- However study has shown that there is much left to do to close the gap between rhetoric and reality in real-world settings and much successful teacher occurs through experience

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