What are alternative education spaces -

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What Are Alternative Education Spaces – and Why do they Matter?

A. ABSTRACT

This paper examines alternative education spaces: schools and other sites that offer children an explicit alternative to attending mainstream schools in the United Kingdom. It is situated within burgeoning, diverse work on 'geographies of education', key approaches to which are outlined in the article. Subsequently, the author uses his research at 59 alternative education spaces to exemplify how geographers examine both what happens 'within' and 'beyond' the school walls, at different spatial scales. The paper offers an overview of a range of geographical (and other) processes that make alternative education spaces 'alternative' – from their financing, to their physical layout, to their ultimate social and educational aims. It also provides some brief case studies from two learning spaces to bring these processes to life. In so doing, the paper prompts consideration of why alternative education spaces might matter – both to geographers and to the wider world.

A. INTRODUCTION

In countries like the United Kingdom, it is assumed that children go to clearly-defined educational institutions in order to engage in formal learning. The vast majority of children spend many of their waking hours in such places: first, in nurseries or kindergartens; then, in primary schools[1], secondary schools, colleges and, perhaps, universities. Yet in the UK, in distinction to countries like Germany, there is no legal requirement that children must attend school. In fact, according to UK educational law, it is the responsibility of parents – not the UK Government – to ensure that their children receive a suitable education.

This clause in UK educational law means that if parents can find a suitable alternative, their children do not have to go to school. In fact, in the UK, it is estimated that only 90% of the school-age population attend what will be termed in this paper a 'mainstream' school – one that is funded by the UK Government, and follows the UK's National Curriculum. Around five per cent of the population attend independent, fee-paying schools, which will be familiar to most readers, and are known in the UK as either 'private' or 'public' schools (Independent Schools Council, 2012). The majority of these 2,600 schools look more-or-less like mainstream schools, teach to a similar curriculum, and test their pupils in the same way.

This paper, however, is focussed on the remaining 5% of the school-aged population: around 500,000 children, aged 4-18[2]. It examines *explicit* alternatives to conventional ways of doing education in the UK in a context where it is assumed that most children go to a mainstream, State-funded school. It considers spaces that deliberately teach to a different curriculum, and try *not* to look and feel like schools. Some of the children concerned never go to a place formally designated as a 'school' – perhaps learning at home, in museums, forests, farms, parks, or other spaces. Other children *do* go to a school, but those schools may be smaller, may teach classes to a wider range of ages, or may place less emphasis on testing than mainstream schools. All of them are based on alternative pedagogies – different sets of beliefs about how children learn, what they are learning, and the best ways to teach them (Sliwka, 2008).

By way of distinction, it is important to note here that in the UK, some 'alternatives' exist *within* mainstream (State-run) schools. Examples include provision for students with emotional, behavioural or learning differences, after-school clubs and extended services provided to local communities (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014). In addition, many mainstream schools are urged to offer 'personalised' forms of learning to students, through which students navigate an individualised path and take responsibility for their own learning

(Pykett, 2009). However, this paper is not concerned with these kinds of 'in-school' alternatives, but with spaces that are, in and of themselves, positioned as alternatives *to* the mainstream sector and situated outside that sector in terms of curriculum and funding. As this paper shows, such a definition encompasses a broad range of spaces – and there are some overlaps with the above in-school alternatives – yet these kinds of space have rarely been subject to scrutiny by academic geographers and raise a unique set of questions.

Given the legal situation described above, the UK is home to a wide range of educational alternatives (Carnie, 2003), some of which are introduced later on in the paper. Whilst alternative education spaces exist in several other countries – notably the USA, Australia and New Zealand – the UK exhibits as much, if not more, diversity in its alternative education sector than any other country. Since these kinds of spaces will not be familiar to most readers, this paper aims to ask some rather fundamental questions about alternative education spaces:

- What are the *geographies* of alternative education spaces: what do they look like, and how do they work?
- To what extent are alternative education spaces connected to and/or disconnected from the 'mainstream'?
- What can geographers learn from looking at alternative education spaces?

These questions are intended to provoke readers to consider what might be learned from looking beyond the perceived 'norm', and to critically reflect on the spaces in which they have been educated. The questions are also intended to encourage broader reflection on how and why geographers might be interested in education spaces at all. Thus, aside from two brief case studies, the paper does not provide an in-depth investigation of specific kinds of learning spaces, or of particular schools; nor does it provide an account of the experiences of children themselves (for far more detail on all of these elements, see Kraftl, 2013a). Rather,

the analysis in this paper provides an overview of the various kinds of alternative education spaces that exist in the UK, providing readers with a more extensive and schematic picture of the different ways in which alternative education spaces seek to provide 'alternatives'. Therefore, the paper is intended to constitute an introduction for readers unfamiliar with alternative education research, a stimulus to further reading and research about each of the themes covered, and a prompt to consider how alternative education spaces might matter – both to wider societies and to geographical researchers. The two brief case studies included towards the end of the paper offer brief glimpses into two alternative education spaces, which are intended to bring to life – and to bring together – some of the themes discussed in the overview. The paper ends by asking readers to reconsider the questions listed above.

A. GEOGRAPHIES OF EDUCATION

At first glance, education may appear not to be a particularly 'geographical' topic: something that might, instead, be the realm of educational researchers, professionals and, of course, teachers. Yet geographers have had a relatively long-standing interest in education (for excellent but contrasting reviews, see Collins and Coleman, 2008; Hanson Thiem, 2009; Holloway and Jöns, 2012). In fact, geographers from across the discipline have examined education spaces – and especially mainstream schools – in different ways. Table 1 offers a generalised view of the issues that different kinds of geographers have studied when looking at education.

TABLE 1 GOES ABOUT HERE

Table 1:A schematic view of geographical research on education. The division between issues 'within' and 'beyond' institutions follows Collins and Coleman (2008). References in brackets provide indicative examples of research in each area.

The divisions in Table 1 highlight considerable diversity in geographical research on education. The rows indicate that education has been a focus for study by geographers from various subdisciplines. Each of them provides a unique perspective, often working at a particular spatial scale and with specialist research methods. For instance, urban geographers' research on racial segregation has tended to use quantitative techniques to discern the relationship between school attendance and residential patterns, in large urban areas. Meanwhile, social and cultural geographers have used in-depth interviews and observations in research with teachers and children to uncover what happens within the micro-scale of individual classrooms (Holloway et al., 2010).

The columns in Table 1 are divided following Collins and Coleman's (2008, p.281) schematic division between those educational processes that take place 'within' and those taking place 'beyond' the walls of a school, university or other educational institution. In Table 1, they are intended to provide a generalised sense of *where* geographers have done their work and, again, at what geographical scale. The kinds of issues studied 'within' institutions refer to the internal characteristics that make up a school. For instance, as Table 1 shows, social and cultural geographers have been interested in the physical design of a school, in how that design means teachers (usually) have power over pupils, and in how children develop a sense of identity at school – in the classroom, corridors or on the playground. Nevertheless, political and economic geographers have offered particularly important insights 'beyond' the school walls – for instance into impacts of larger-scale

educational policies, including national policies for restructuring schools in New Zealand (Witten et al., 2003).

The simplicity of Table 1 is deceptive, however. It hides two concerns that have been a source of debate amongst contemporary human geographers. First, it is questionable whether these hugely diverse topics of study should be labelled 'geographies of education' at all (Hanson Thiem, 2009). Other than an interest in education, there is relatively little to tie them together. Yet, increasing reference has been made to 'geographies of education', by many scholars. At the very least, it is important to be constantly reminded that these are 'geograph*ies*' of education, in the plural: several approaches to very different issues at different geographical scales. Second, the columns imply some kind of a divide between research focussing on those processes occurring 'within' and 'beyond' the school walls. In practice – and this can be seen by looking at the examples – it is rarely the case that this division holds. For instance, the idea of educating children to be citizens of a particular nation actually combines everyday experiences of the classroom with concerns written into urban playground policies in early-twentieth-century New York (Gagen, 2004), or citizenship education in today's UK National Curriculum (Pykett, 2012). It remains useful to think about the different scales at which education occurs: but the boundaries are porous and overlapping.

A. RESEARCHING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SPACES: A METHODOLOGY

The rest of this paper is based upon a large-scale research project that sought to examine the geographies of alternative education in the UK (Kraftl, 2013a). Given the novelty of the research, any number of the approaches in Table 1 could have been followed, with implications for the research methodology. However, the project was guided by two principles. Firstly, and most importantly, to moving 'the *subjects* of education – the children,

young people and adults involved in learning and teaching – into the foreground' (Holloway et al., 2010, p.594). Whilst not necessarily providing a representative overview of *all* alternative education spaces in the UK, the aim was to uncover some of the rich diversity of ways in which alternative education spaces worked, 'within' the spaces themselves. Nevertheless, secondly, the project methodology involved a sample of diverse kinds of alternative education spaces all over the UK – from Cornwall to northeastern Scotland (Table 2). Doing so enabled a consideration of the ways in which different kinds of alternative education spaces were linked to the mainstream in different geographical and social contexts.

TABLE 2 GOES ABOUT HERE

Table 2: Overview of a selection of alternative education spaces in the UK. For the full sample and detailed descriptions, please see Kraftl, 2013a.

Referring back to Table 1, then – and the questions that began this paper – this project aimed to examine geographies of education both within *and* beyond the boundaries of individual educational sites. It combined social- and cultural-geographic approaches, led by a commitment to understanding the experiences of teachers and learners. In practice, this meant a visit, by the author, to 59 alternative education spaces in the UK (summarised in Table 2). Each visit lasted between one and three days. At each site, the author made observations in a field diary, participated in organised activities, and engaged learners and teachers[3] in informal conversations. The author also undertook semi-structured interviews with 114 learners and teachers, which were, when appropriate, audio recorded and transcribed. Whilst the research

process was relatively open-ended, data collection was guided by a range of particularly geographical themes:

- the design, layout and furnishing of learning spaces;

- the designation of boundaries, routes and channels that restricted or enabled movement;

- the use of different senses – touch, sight, smell – to make a learning space come to life and create a particular 'feel';

- the use of spaces, boundaries and feelings to teach or change learners physical, bodily skills;

- the relationship between what happened at the local scale and broader scales: from the local community to the entire globe.

All of the research, and especially that with young people under 18, followed strict ethical protocols developed by geographers and others who work with children (e.g. Matthews, 1998). The fieldnotes, notes from interviews and transcribed interviews were combined into a common dataset and analysed using thematic analysis, bearing in mind the geographical themes listed above. Given its scope, this paper makes little direct reference to interview material from adults and children. This is not to downplay the importance of their voices – in fact, they inform the overview provided below – but readers interested in reading more directly about what adults and children thought, and in deeper qualitative analysis, might refer to other texts by the author (e.g. Kraftl, 2013a).

A. WHAT MAKES AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SPACE 'ALTERNATIVE'?

Given the earlier discussion of geographies of education that could be situated 'within' and/or 'beyond' the walls of an educational institution, this section addresses the above question by combining an attention to *both*. Through an overview of some of the author's findings across 59 alternative education spaces, and reference to the relatively small field of scholarly research about alternative education, it therefore offers some answers to two of the questions raised in the introduction:

- What are the *geographies* of alternative education spaces: what do they look like, and how do they work?
- To what extent are alternative education spaces connected to and/or disconnected from the 'mainstream'?

At the outset, it is worth noting that the term 'alternative' can be understood in different ways in the alternative education sector. Writing about a global set of case studies, Woods and Woods (2009) argue that alternative educators may attempt to do one of three things in respect of the educational mainstream. First, they may seek to *separate* themselves – essentially, constituting an isolationist bubble that sets up careful boundaries so as to protect what happens 'within' the school walls. Second, they may seek to *engage* – to get involved in partnerships with local schools, or take funding and a degree of regulation from a national Government (as has become increasingly the case in New Zealand: www.http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz). Third, they may be *activist* – perhaps also separatist or engaged, but involved in a range of politicised activities designed to bolster debate about educational alternatives. Some Homeschoolers, for instance, have used the internet and other technologies to form pressure groups, most famously in order to lobby for the legalisation of Homeschooling in the USA (Collom and Mitchell, 2005).

Notwithstanding the importance of Woods and Woods' schematic, the analysis that follows will make two important contributions. First, it will argue that very few alternative educators in the UK aim at or practice complete separation; indeed, even those that do isolate themselves from the 'mainstream' in some ways will engage in others. Second, it will demonstrate how, if we look at the *geographies* of alternative education, we can see that 'engagement' is in fact a multi-faceted, complicated, and often ever-changing process, combining different spatial scales. Table 3 provides an overview of the different ways in which education spaces could be considered to be alternative.

Table 3 GOES ABOUT HERE

*Table 3: A schematic overview of the ways in which alternative education spaces are 'alternative' yet linked to the mainstream. *The terms used to describe funding mechanisms are adapted from JK Gibson-Graham's (2008) 'diverse economies' framework, which critically assesses alternative ways of doing economic transactions/labour within and beyond global capitalism.*

Table 3 lists five (of many) key ways in which alternative learning spaces seek to constitute *some* kind of difference from what is perceived to happen in the educational mainstream. However, even a quick glance at the table will impress that there is considerable variety within each of the five key themes. It becomes evident that as much as some educators attempt to be alternative in some ways, they do not in others; moreover, there are as many, if not more significant connections *with* the mainstream as there are disconnections. For instance, whereas some alternative educations take place in learning spaces that are designed *not* to be 'school-like' (some Human-Scale schools), others take place in schools, albeit schools that are meant to feel more 'homely' than mainstream school buildings (most Steiner

Schools). Elsewhere, whilst some establishments are funded through less conventional means (like Homeschooling and some Care Farms), others are, effectively, funded either by the State (although indirectly) or by private payments from parents – like other independent schools. An additional layer of complexity within Table 3 is that there is diversity *within* each educational approach – most notably within Homeschooling (Kraftl, 2013b), Care Farming and Democratic/Human-Scale Schooling. Therefore, the examples provided in Table 3 really only give an indication of the significance of each of the five key themes to each approach, and should be treated with caution.

Table 3 illustrates two arguments about alternative education spaces. Firstly, that what makes an alternative education space 'alternative' is about more than the way it teaches children. There is, in addition, a complex range of overtly *geographical* processes at play: from the very physical design, boundaries and colour of a learning space to the ways a learning space is meant to change a young person's behaviour or habits. Secondly, that there is considerable diversity in the ways in which alternative education spaces interact with the mainstream, at different spatial scales: from the ways in which some serve their local communities, to various educational, regulatory and aid networks, at national and international scales. However, in order to gain a fuller sense of these geographical processes, it is useful to look in a little more depth at two examples of specific education spaces. Each example picks out a particular combination of themes from Table 3.

a. A Forest-School in southwest England[4]

Figure 1 GOES ABOUT HERE

Figure 1: The woodland in which Joanne's Forest School is situated. Author's photograph.

For a couple of years prior to my visit, Joanne had been running a Forest School in a small patch of woodland adjacent to a socio-economically disadvantaged urban estate (Figure 1). She ran weekly Forest School groups for young mothers, and a series of groups for older boys. Like many Forest School teachers, Joanne was not funded by the UK Government, and valued her independence. Yet at the same time, and despite her radical roots (she explained she had a background in radical direct environmental activism), she had deliberately set up a publicly-limited company [2d][5] and was not averse to working with 'the State', as she put it:

> 'The young Mums group I run – that's organised through the local Sure Start Centre [3d], and I work with them pretty closely. In fact, I worked there myself for a time. But now I have my own public limited company. It we were State-funded, we'd be part of the Local Authority. You would lose your local autonomy [...] I'm not averse to being blockfunded by the State, but at the moment, everyone who comes here gets an individual experience from us, and I'm able to be socially accountable to my local community because of the way my company is set up.'

Joanne's experience is indicative of the complex, sometimes ambivalent, and, often, ever-changing way in which alternative education spaces are organised. Her experiences of working with but apart from the State, whilst remaining 'accountable' to her local community, are quite common, especially for Care Farmers and other Forest School teachers.

At the same time, like a growing range of commentators (e.g. Louv, 2005), Joanne argued that today's generation of young people spends too little time in 'natural environments' (also Kraftl, 2013c). She was attempting to build what she called a 'community of inquiry' about the benefits of outdoor education, especially in forest environments [5c]. Specifically, she

was beginning to work with UK National Health Service and, especially, the National Trust, as part of their 'Natural Childhoods' campaign (http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/big-issues/nature-and-outdoors/natural-childhood/). Since both are 'mainstream' organisations – albeit not educational institutions – Joanne was indicative of several teachers and practitioners who sought to build social networks and engage in advocacy for children and young people (Table 3). Thus, in her work, Joanne routinely crossed the boundaries between spaces 'within' and 'beyond' the confines of her (outdoor) classroom (Collins and Coleman, 2008).

a. A Steiner School in the English Midlands

Figure 2 GOES ABOUT HERE

Figure 2: An image from a Steiner kindergarten. Author's photograph.

Steiner kindergartens are striking physical spaces, designed to impact upon young children and their learning. They are intended to be 'homely' spaces: they are painted a subtle pink and, as Figure 2 shows, filled with simple wooden toys and draped cloths that stimulate the imagination. The kindergarten teacher adopts a 'motherly' persona (even if, in some schools, they are male), creating an atmosphere of home through baking and cooking, songs, and story-telling (Kraftl, 2006). These are intimate 'embodied geographies' (Longhurst, 2001), firmly located within the school walls: the pink walls and wooden toys amount to little without the appropriate bodily gestures and practices from the 'motherly' teacher that create the aura of home. This is an example of what, after Pile and Keith (1993), geographers now refer to as 'spatiality': a dynamic combination of physical spaces with social practices, which give each other meaning, and can never be disentangled from one another.

At one school in the English Midlands, I interviewed a very experienced Steiner teacher, Michael, and asked him about the extent to which Steiner schools should be seen as 'alternative' schools. In parallel with Joanne's experience at her Forest School, Michael's response was complex.

> 'When we started at the school, we fought the whole notion of being alternative – then [in the 1980s] it maybe had stronger connotations – hippy. Our view is that we are complementary. Our timing may be different, and our approach, we are an alternative to the National Curriculum, yes, in that sense, but in terms of education, it's complementary, and there have actually been increasing links with the mainstream, if you want to put it that way.'

I know of at least two Steiner Schools that have similarly been branded 'alternative' in a derogatory sense. Indeed, Michael was very careful to specify *how* his Steiner School was alternative in a pedagogic sense – including the training of its teachers, administered outside mainstream teacher training routes [3a]. At the same time, Michael provided a brief sense of how the meaning of being 'alternative' had shifted over time: unlike during the 1980s, it now meant something more instrumental, linked to the curriculum. Indeed, more recently, as he noted, a review of Steiner education in the UK examined how certain features might be incorporated into the UK National Curriculum [3c] (Woods et al., 2005).

However, to add another layer of complexity, Michael also talked about a very different kind of connection that appeared more abstract. He explained how the spatiality of the kindergarten – homely, caring, loving – was carried with the children as they grew up, acting as a basis for their future learning as they progressed through the school. Ultimately, a key aim of Steiner education, beyond its creative, artistic teaching methods [4a], is to educate young people to be

aware of their place in the world, enabling them to be critical, loving and responsible citizens of the world [4b, 4f, 5e] (Oberski, 2011). As Michael put it:

> 'the school [provides] an atmosphere that might nourish them for the rest of their life. And that is done with a gesture of love. Towards the world, to humanity.'

There is a spiritual dimension here, too, which there is unfortunately not space to discuss in this paper (see Woods et al., 1997). This may therefore seem a little difficult to grasp, but the basic message is that there is a direct relationship between the minutiae of the kindergarten experience and the kinds of adults that Steiner children should become. Whilst the Steiner School itself may appear somewhat removed from the mainstream, the idea is that young people it spawns are anything but – aware of their roles and responsibilities in the world at the very largest scale. Indeed, interestingly, there is evidence that this works to some extent: in comparison with 18-19 year-olds leaving mainstream schools, Steiner School-leavers were shown to display more interest and awareness about a range of "social and moral questions" (Dahlin, 2010, p.165).

A. CONCLUSION: WHAT CAN GEOGRAPHERS LEARN FROM LOOKING AT ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SPACES?

Alternative education spaces are important because they throw into sharp relief most people's assumptions about education and childhood. In the broadest sense – and this extends beyond academic research – it is as important to look outside the mainstream as it is within. This is because sometimes it is only in looking at practices that are intended to be 'alternative', somehow, that some of the assumptions and norms of the mainstream become more evident. Indeed, geographers have been engaged in an increasing number of studies of what Longhurst

(2013, p.2100) terms 'alternative milieu' - places that are set up to undertake life differently from a perceived mainstream, whether through alternative food networks, local exchange/trading schemes, or diverse ways of rewarding labour (also Gibson-Graham, 2008).

However, an equally pressing reason for looking at alternative education spaces is that, in the UK at least, they are on the increase. Care Farms and Forest Schools alone have witnessed a many-fold increase in number since 2000, and they are, as this article has begun to show, far from divorced from the educational mainstream. In the research project upon which this paper was based, for instance, the author saw Care Farms being used for work experience for secondary school children, day-long visits by primary schools, and as informal places for teenagers to hang out at the weekend (in the absence of many other places to go). At the same time, following strict austerity measures and public service cutbacks in the UK, non-State-funded organisations like Care Farms have become increasingly important resources for local communities. Meanwhile, as more mainstream schools than ever before seek to grow their own food and raise animals, Care Farmers have found themselves offering free advice to those schools.

Finally, then, even if not all alternative educational spaces fulfil such diverse roles, what can geographers learn from looking at them? The overview provided by this paper has shown that, perhaps most importantly, alternative education spaces constitute a very different context in which to undertake research on the geographies of education. Most fundamentally, in setting out the lie of the alternative education landscape, this paper has shown that education – at least in contexts like the UK – takes place in a much wider variety of spaces than might first be apparent from the majority of work on geographies of education, which has remained resolutely focussed on mainstream schools and universities (Holloway et al., 2010). Education takes place in homes, parks, forests, farms – as well as in places that are called schools but whose architecture, design, and furnishings may be quite different. But

education spaces are not just comprised by their physical design. Alternative education spaces also question some of the fundamental social rules of mainstream schools: some mix up children across a range of age groups; others challenge the idea that a teacher has authority over a class; others still allow teenage boys, at risk of exclusion from school, to light fires and use knives. It may not be that all of these alternative ways of doing things work out all the time. Indeed, as the author discovered when talking to ex-pupils at a Democratic School, it may not be that teachers are always willing or able to relinquish all of their authority over children. Yet, they at least pose questions about whether conventional ways of viewing childhood and the relationship between adults and children – the subject of geographical study for many years (Holloway and Valentine, 2000) – might be challenged.

In addition, alternative education spaces offer important and diverse examples through which to study the mutual production and linking of different geographical scales. It is not merely the case that geographies of education must combine an attention to what happens 'within' and 'beyond' the school walls – many geographers already work from this premise (Table 1). Rather, alternative education spaces draw attention to how local, micro-scaled, bodily practices are 'up-scaled' – from national or international networks of childhood advocates, to the idea that caring for a young child in a homely environment in a Steiner School might one day afford them a sense of responsibility to the world at large. Sometimes, geographers who look at bodies and emotions have been criticised for not making connections between the 'small' and the 'large' (Lorimer, 2008) – although that does not mean that the latter are necessarily more important. Nevertheless, like that other geographical scholarship that has tied in what happens in the classroom with ideas about citizenship or national identity (e.g. Gagen, 2004; Pykett, 2012), it is important to recognise that society's 'big political issues' can be recursively produced at the smallest, most intimate, bodily scales, amongst the youngest members of the populace.

Finally, however, alternative education spaces raise a series of questions, which could provoke further discussion amongst geographers, and which readers of this article might like to consider.

1. What might the teaching and learning of *geography* look like in alternative education spaces? Would it – and should it – be any different from that in 'mainstream' schools, colleges or universities?

2. What other kinds of 'alternative' spaces do geographers study, and how and why do they do this? Consider, for instance, research on diverse economic practices (Gibson-Graham, 2008), food networks (Goodman et al., 2011), transition towns (Brown et al., 2012) and housing (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). How do these spaces compare with alternative education spaces? Are they related in any way?

3. Do alternative education spaces exist in other countries? What do these look like, and what is their relationship with 'mainstream' education? Does the 'mainstream' vary in different geographical contexts?

4. Bearing in mind that free education is not universally available in every country, is alternative education a privilege of rich societies? And if it is, what does this mean for those societies that are not able to take part in it?

A. NOTES

[1]This list reflects dominant mainstream school-types in the UK: primary schools are generally attended by children aged 4-11; secondary schools by young people aged 11-18; colleges by young people aged 16+.

[2]In the UK, children must be engaged in full-time education between the ages of 4 and 16; in practice, however, many young people remain in some form of education until the age of 18.

[3]The terms 'learners' and 'teachers' are used as shorthand in this paper for children/young people and the adults who had responsibility for their learning.

[4]Owing to the ethical process, it was agreed that names of people and places would not be revealed without full consent. Therefore, all names are pseudonyms.

[5]References in brackets refer to the relevant themes in Table 3.

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