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**The use and impact of peer support schemes in schools in the
UK, and a comparison with use in Japan and South Korea**

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PhD in Psychology

Signed Declaration:

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Alana James

Abstract

Peer support approaches, where pupils offer formal support to others, are used in schools as an additional source of pastoral care. Previous research shows benefits for whole school environments, pupils who receive support, and pupil peer supporters, but is largely limited to Western case studies, which are often short-term and/or limited to qualitative data. This thesis addresses these issues through cross-national work on peer support use, and longitudinal case studies.

Peer support use in Japan was investigated through a qualitative study. A range of approaches was seen and major themes identified, including the evolution of Japanese peer support, conflicts in approaches, and an emphasis upon community. A qualitative study in South Korea explored peer support and other anti-bullying initiatives, both proactive and reactive. Thematic analysis showed the importance of collectivist values, and a gap between policy and practice. Peer support was little used and, despite positive attitudes, barriers were perceived. A comparison of the UK, Japan and South Korea considered the impact of cultural values, education systems and the nature of bullying upon peer support use.

Two mixed methodology case studies of peer listening schemes in UK secondary schools were conducted, one over 18 months and another over six months. Both schemes had the general aim of providing additional pupil support, without focus on particular outcomes. Impact upon the domains typically benefited by peer support was evaluated; findings were broadly similar. Pupil awareness of the service was high, but in-depth knowledge was weaker and use was low. Attitudes were mixed, impact upon bullying and school climate was limited, but users and peer supporters perceived benefits. Both schemes evolved to include multiple approaches, and practical factors affecting development and effectiveness were identified.

Finally, implications for peer support practice are drawn from the findings as a whole, and future research directions suggested.

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Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

This thesis focuses upon the use of peer support systems in schools. Broadly speaking, peer support is where pupils in schools provide support for other pupils in some way. Peer support usually takes the shape of a formalised scheme which provides an additional source of pastoral care within the school environment. For around two decades, peer support has been a growing topic of research and it remains an area where psychological research can have great impact upon practice.

Peer support is being implemented in more and more schools, in an increasing number of countries. The importance of children's welfare is achieving increasing international recognition. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1991) has led to many countries making child protection a higher priority. Save the Children, UNICEF and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) all prioritise children's emotional health and well-being in their policy recommendations (Cowie, 2009).

In the UK a number of legal frameworks and government initiatives have emerged, necessitating that schools look after the emotional well-being of those in their care. For example, in England there has been: Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), Safe to Learn (DCSF, 2008) and Healthy Schools (an initiative running since 1999, initiated by the then Department for Children, Schools and Family and the Department of Health). Peer support is a key way for schools to ensure they are looking after the emotional needs of pupils.

It also enables children to take an active role in the running of their school. The UN Convention (UN, 1991) advances the right of children to have a voice, and in the UK at least this seems to be reflected in an increased requirement for schools to promote pupil citizenship and hear pupil views (Watts & Youens, 2007). In 2003, for example, a statutory citizenship curriculum was introduced (DfES, 2003).

However, developing a peer support system involves a lot of time, effort and practical resources, and involves children dealing with others' sensitive difficulties. I propose that continued research in this area can help enable schools and practitioners to develop and run effective peer support systems, where children are supported and safeguarded.

A comprehensive exploration of peer support in schools is provided below. I begin by presenting different definitions of peer support and its history. The varieties of support that can be offered by pupils, the extent of peer support use internationally, and the

reasons schools may choose to develop a scheme are then examined. I then explore findings from previous studies, looking at the impact peer support schemes have in schools. Finally, I identify research limitations and outline the areas that will be investigated in this thesis.

Definitions of peer support and its history

Peer support is where pupils help other pupils in their school, through formalised activities and with staff supervision. The central principle of peer support is that it can be helpful for children to receive support from their peers, rather than adults. Peers have been described as “someone who is about the same age as yourself; for children this is usually someone in the same year, class or age grade” (Smith, Cowie & Blades, 2003, p. 136). In terms of peer support in schools, the support may be provided by pupils in the same class or school year, but also by pupils in older years. Toda (2005, p. 59) describes peer support as “social support by individuals who are similar in age and/or social conditions to the person receiving support”. Others have noted that peer support builds upon the natural helpfulness normally found in friendship groups, and should be run by peers for peers (Topping, 1996; Cowie, Naylor, Talamelli & Smith, 2002; Cowie & Wallace, 2000). It provides a source of support from other young people for those who do not have friends or who would prefer to talk to a non-friend. Peer supporters are likely to have more in common with the pupils needing help, than school staff. Topping (1996) notes that “peers can speak to each other in the vernacular, directly, with the credibility of participants in the same culture and without any overtones of social control and authoritarianism” (p. 24). Difficulties that young people face often originate from their peer group in the first place, so pupils may be well placed to help solve other pupils’ problems (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). In particular, the peer group can both promote and help diminish anti-social behaviour, and adolescents may prefer peer-led anti-bullying interventions as they do not like accepting adult authority telling them what to do (Salmivalli, 1999; 2001). The peer group is a major influence in children’s socialization; peer support systems can help ensure this is a positive influence.

It may also be easier for pupils to report their problems to other children than to distant adults. Research on the reporting of school bullying shows that pupils who do not disclose being victimized may do so out of a lack of confidence and that children generally do not perceive that teachers care about people being bullied (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003). It has been found that not only do victims fear telling staff will make the bullying worse, but that when teachers intervene they may help, make no difference, or indeed make it worse

(Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003; Smith & Shu, 2000).

Although it capitalises on the way that young people may spontaneously help their friends, the reach of peer support is greater. Cowie and Wallace's (2000) book on the practice of peer support pays attention to the notion that peer support can positively transform a school community. Cowie and Smith (2010) also emphasise the ability of peer support to create a supportive community and describe it as being based in the philosophy of counselling. Peer support encourages a sense of positive citizenship within a school. It has been defined as "a form of lived morality and encompasses a range of activities and systems within which people's potential to be helpful to one another can be fostered through appropriate training" (Cowie & Smith, 2010 p. 180). The idea of a 'lived morality' points to the development of a supportive school ethos.

Other descriptions of peer support have also suggested that pupil training is important. Key features of peer support identified by Cowie and Wallace (2000), and which are re-emphasised later in Cowie and Hutson (2005), are that young people are trained to help others outside friendship groups, that training develops key skills (such as communication skills) and enables them to deal with conflict. Similarly, Houlston and Smith (2009) identified key elements of peer support to be that selected pupils will be trained, and that these peer supporters either directly support pupil users of peer support or enable them to access help elsewhere. Such training is usually designed to meet the needs and goals of a particular scheme, and is experiential (Cowie et al., 2002).

Generally however, communication and interpersonal skills are seen as key in any scheme. Peer supporters tend to use active listening, but also need to be able to demonstrate a problem-solving stance (Cowie & Smith, 2010). Whilst peer support has been described as a form of 'lived morality' it is important to note that pupil training does not emphasise a particular morality or prescribe ways that people should generally act towards one another. Rather, a sense of positive citizenship is inherent in the concept and delivery of peer support, and training equips pupils with the skills needed to perform their role.

Whilst it is advocated that peer support is run by pupils for pupils, peer supporters should be supported in their role by staff. Unlike the help that young people offer their friends, peer support is a formalised system and staff supervision of this is a key element. Regular supervision of the peer supporters is generally strongly recommended (e.g. Baginsky, 2004; Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Typically there will be one member of school staff who acts as the scheme co-ordinator, and who will be the main person involved in the

planning, development and hands-on running of the system. It is recommended that the co-ordinator actively participate in pupil training, take responsibility for meeting scheme goals, keep reviewing the scheme, and be the main point of contact regarding peer support for both staff and pupils (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). The school also has a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of those in its care, and therefore staff members need to ensure that they are aware if any child protection issues are disclosed to peer supporters.

Overall, key elements of peer support appear to be:

1. Support is provided for pupils by their peers, who are similar in some ways to the people being supported
2. Pupil peer supporters may be selected and given training to develop appropriate skills
3. Activities will be supervised by school staff
4. It promotes a sense of helpfulness/morality
5. It can contribute to the development of a positive school community

Peer support is currently used in many countries around the world. It initially developed in the US in the 1970s, and has been widely used in Canada and Australia since the 1980s. More recently peer support systems have become internationally popular as anti-bullying interventions, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Cowie & Smith, 2010; UN, 1991). Cowie and Smith (2010) report that peer support has been researched in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, Italy, Spain, Finland, Japan and New Zealand. Peer support approaches have also been reported or cited in Saudi Arabia, Norway, the Netherlands and South Africa (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999; Baginsky, 2004; Diesen Paus, n.d.; Junger-Tas, 1999).

Information on the history and development of peer support use is generally limited to the above information on the time at which it became popular and where. Topping (1996) tracks the development of peer education as emerging as a topic for study in the mid-1970s, at the point that personal and social education in schools was proving ineffective. He also traces the history of peer counselling programmes to the early 1970s, with early programmes aiming at helping target pupils with social and behavioural difficulties, and notes that the question of whether professional counselling was more effective than peer counselling had been raised in the 1960s.

More information is available on the history of peer mediation. This approach has been traced back to peace education and community mediation systems in the US (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Tyrrell, 2002, as cited in Baginsky, 2004). Conflict resolution work in

schools and community mediation services both appeared in the US in the 1970s, leading to mediation programmes in schools (Tyrrell & Farrell, 1995). Cowie and Wallace (2000) suggest that peer mediation became popular in the US in the 1980s, as schools were seeking outside methods to help with social problems, and spread to other countries in the late 1980s and 1990s. In Northern Ireland the development of peer mediation is linked to peace and conflict resolution work, and supported by Quaker organisations (Tyrrell & Farrell, 1995). Baginsky's (2004) review paper indicates that it developed in the UK in the early 1990s, with work focused on primary schools, and was introduced to schools through several routes: community mediation services, work with young offenders and government or local government initiatives. Schools in the UK may have been receptive to peer mediation at this time due to the emergence of other initiatives in the education system, which emphasised the value of pupils' relationships and co-operation (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Other peer support approaches, such as peer counselling, also seem to have emerged in relation to the increasing importance placed on such values.

It appears that the development of peer support initiatives is linked to the increasing importance of tackling social issues within schools. Its history seems to run in parallel with that of pastoral care in schools. Pastoral care broadly refers to the support and nurturing of pupils – the recognition that schools are responsible for pupil welfare as well as education. It has been suggested that it emerged in the UK in the 19th century from public schools and the Christian philosophy influencing school education (Hearn, Campbell-Pope, House & Cross, 2006, p. 6, as cited in de Jong & Kerr-Roubicek, 2007; Lang, 1983, as cited in Best, 1999). Pastoral care appears to have gradually evolved over time, with full programmes and systems for pastoral care having emerged in UK schools by around the 1970s. Best (1999) cites a number of possible reasons for this: the application of the public school model to state schools after World War II, the need to track pupils in the larger comprehensive schools, and developments to suit those directing and administering education.

In Australia pastoral care, having originated from the UK, is described as typically “associated with notions of help, advice and moral guidance offered to students by school staff with particular support roles” (de Jong & Kerr-Roubicek, 2007, p. 2). De Jong & Kerr-Roubicek (2007) argue that Australian pastoral care has shifted towards an emphasis on whole-school approaches over the last two decades and outline a proposed framework. This includes the development of a caring school climate; the authors suggest that: “an ethos of care embraces students caring for students” (p. 8) and give examples of processes like peer mentoring and tutoring. It is clear that pastoral care and peer support

share similar principles and aims, and it is not surprising that peer support emerged around the time that formal pastoral care approaches began to be seen in schools.

One reason that peer support may be popular in so many countries is that it offers an approach for the achievement of pastoral care, rather than a prescriptive 'one size fits all' method. It can take a variety of different forms, be modified to target different aims, and be developed over time within a school environment.

Different types of peer support

A number of different terms can be used to refer to peer support and peer supporters, reflecting the variety of methods which may be used. Pupils who provide support may be called 'peer supporters', 'peer mentors', 'befrienders', 'buddies', 'peer mediators', 'peer listeners', 'peer counsellors', 'peer helpers', or a unique, catchier name chosen by the individual school. All types of peer support share the central idea of pupils supporting others in their school, with staff supervision, but support can be provided in a range of ways. Cowie and Wallace (2000) proposed that types of peer support fall into two main groups: approaches that offer emotional support and approaches that emphasise education and information-giving. The former category includes befriending, mediation and peer counselling, whereas the latter includes peer tutoring, peer education and mentoring. Overall the most common approaches identified are befriending, mediation, mentoring and peer listening or counselling based services. A recent survey of peer support use in a representative sample of schools across England employed these categories, as well as lunchtime clubs and an 'other' category (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009). The descriptions used in the survey and greater details about each of the most common types of approach follow.

Befriending

In comparison to other forms of peer support, befriending is a more informal approach. In their survey Houlston et al. (2009, p. 328) described this as: "encouraging peer supporters or "buddies" to build friendships with vulnerable or lonely children". The pupils who receive support from befrienders may either be identified as vulnerable by school staff, be seen by befrienders as needing support, or self-request support. In primary schools, the scheme may operate by having an area of the school playground or a bench where lonely pupils can go and befrienders will approach them (Smith & Watson, 2004). Befrienders are usually the same age as the children they help or older, are chosen by staff for their

especially friendly nature, and receive training to promote interpersonal skills (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

Mediation

Peer mediation is a much more structured type of peer support. This approach was described in the survey as: “training peer supporters to resolve peer conflicts and bullying situations” (Houlston et al., 2009, p. 328). Mediators are meant to act as a neutral third party, helping resolve conflicts between pupils, or groups of pupils. Participants should agree voluntarily to enter into mediation, and there should be a follow-up meeting where the outcomes are reviewed (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Communication skills are essential; mediators must emphasise, facilitate and help problem-solve (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

Mediation is a process by which conflicts are peacefully resolved. For example, a study of a school-university partnership programme called Mediator Mentors, developed in the US, describes the basic components of the peer mediation model as: facilitate comfort with the process; generate agreement to the ground rules; facilitate disputants’ statements of the problem and associated feelings; active listening; elicit expressions of wants and willings; facilitate solutions brainstorming; evaluations of options and cooperative formations of solutions, and agreement to use mediation in the future (Lane-Garon, Ybarra-Merlo, Zajac & Vierra, 2005).

Mentoring

Peer mentoring is typically a one to one nurturing and supportive relationship between a peer supporter, or mentor, and a target pupil, or mentee. This approach was described in the survey by Houlston et al. (2009, p. 328) as: “whereby a relationship is formed between a peer mentor who acts as a role model to another pupil (usually younger) who is in need of support and guidance”. Alternatively a peer mentor may be assigned to work with a group of pupils, such as a tutor group of younger children (Cowie & Smith, 2010).

A new version of mentoring, called CyberMentors, has been developed in the UK by the charity *Beat Bullying*; young people are trained face to face and go on to mentor people offline, in their schools and communities, and online, via the CyberMentors website (Beat Bullying, n.d.).

Counselling

Peer support as a general form of pastoral care in schools, is typically seen as emerging from a counselling model. Houlston et al. (2009, p. 328) described peer counselling as:

“peer counsellors provide support to students through relatively formal structured sessions”. Peer counsellors, or listeners, are trained to use active listening skills to support other pupils with their difficulties, either in scheduled appointments or in drop-in sessions which normally take place in a designated place. Cowie and Wallace (2000) suggest that the core skills required for use in counselling based peer support are: giving feedback to peers; attending, showing that you are paying attention to the other person; listening for content, being able to listen for relevant information; listening for intent, being able to listen to the feelings and importance of what is being said; responding; questioning, and waiting in silence.

Regular supervision by a member of school staff or a counsellor is considered a vital feature of peer counselling (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). This is akin to the supervision that adult counsellors typically receive, ensuring that pupil counsellors are not left to deal with sensitive issues by themselves.

Other approaches

Although the above types of peer support are most commonly identified, there are other manifestations. Peer education, where pupils present information to others, is also quite common. Peer-led anti-bullying campaigns may include a strong element of peer education, where pupils present information to others e.g. through role-play or drama. For example, an intervention instigated by peer counsellors in a Finnish school involved the peer counsellors giving anti-bullying information in a whole school meeting and facilitating classroom discussions, as well as younger students designing anti-bullying posters to be displayed in the school for other pupils to see (Salmivalli, 2001). Along similar lines, in some peer support systems pupils help each other with academic work. In a review of 19 English schools using the ChildLine in Partnerships (CHIPS) programme of peer support training examples of approaches included peer supporters helping at a homework club and pupils acting as learning mentors (Smith & Watson, 2004).

Other types of peer support approaches reported include lunchtime clubs, co-operative group work, circle time, circles of friends and more anonymous systems. Lunchtime clubs, where peer supporters run activities for other pupils during school breaks, are another example of more informal peer support (Smith & Watson, 2004; Houlston et al., 2009). In England 43.5% of schools with a peer support system reported that it includes a lunchtime club (Houlston et al., 2009). Co-operative group work gives pupils the opportunity to work together on structured activities in class, and has been described as the most fundamental form of peer support (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Circle

time also occurs in the class group, and is a safe forum for discussion of important issues amongst peers (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). In a circle of friends approach there is a class meeting to encourage pupils to support a child who is socially isolated (this child is involved in preparatory meetings with staff and parents, but not the class meeting). Systems where pupils can request support anonymously include bully box systems where pupils could leave a note in a box or online to request help from a peer supporter and schools may set up a telephone help-line or email system (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Smith & Watson, 2004; Cowie & Hutson, 2005; Cowie & Smith, 2010). The online aspect of Beat Bullying's CyberMentors programme in the UK also offers more anonymous support (Beat Bullying, n.d.).

An anonymous method of seeking help, similar to the bully box systems, has also been reported in Japan. The Question and Answer Method, or Q&A Handout Method, involves pupils anonymously submitting problems in a box and peer supporters then providing possible solutions via a written newsletter, or handout, made available to all children in the school (Kawata, 1996, as cited in Toda, 2005 and Cowie, 2009). Further examples of more anonymised approaches in Japan include peer supporters helping other pupils experiencing difficulties in anonymous newsletters and, similar to that seen in the UK, an anonymous email system (Naofumi & Takayo, 2006; Mihara, 2008; Takeuchi, 2008 - all as cited in Cowie, 2009; Toda & Ito, n.d.).

Other peer support variations have been reported in Japan. The Japanese Peer Support Program refers to a method where all pupils are given training but no formal room or activities are introduced (Toda, 2005). Another approach involves a similar first phase, where all students are given social skills training, but also includes a second stage where older pupils learn how to support younger ones (Taki, 2000; 2001; 2005, as cited in Cowie, 2009). A peer support approach aiming at moral education and involving peer supporters greeting new students and helping their transition from elementary school to junior school, has also been reported in Japan (Yanagawa, 2008, as cited in Cowie, 2009).

It is clear that peer support is an umbrella term encompassing a vast range of possible systems. Moreover, schools may choose to use multiple methods or draw on elements from several to create a unique approach that suits their particular school environment. In the survey of English schools the majority, 68.3%, said that they ran more than one type of peer support method, with secondary schools and schools where peer support had been in place for over four years, being more likely to use a greater number of approaches at once (Houlston et al., 2009).

Extent of peer support use in the UK

The existence of so many different types of peer support systems points to the likelihood that peer support has been used in many schools. Unfortunately, while case studies have been presented from within many countries, few studies have surveyed the extent of peer support use in schools.

Within the UK, there are two reported large surveys of peer support use. In their evaluation of the DfES Anti-Bullying Pack, *Don't Suffer in Silence*, Smith and Samara (2003) report peer support systems in place in 50% of primary and secondary schools in the UK. However, this figure comes from the schools that responded to their survey; 28.5% of contacted schools responded. The sample was also limited in the sense that it only included schools which had requested the second edition of the anti-bullying pack. In the later survey by Houlston et al. (2009) a more representative sample of English schools was taken, including open primary and secondary schools from randomly selected Local Authorities (LAs) in nine geographical regions. Once corrections were made for non-response error, the authors found that an estimated 61.8% of all English schools use some form of peer support system. No regional variables were associated with differential peer support use. For primary schools an estimated 56.9% use peer support, and for secondary schools 68.5%. Within primary schools befriending was the most common approach, followed by mediation, and within secondary schools mentoring, followed by befriending.

One likely reason that peer support use is so popular, and possibly increasing, in the UK is a high level of recent government-backing. In particular the then Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) contracted a long-term peer mentoring pilot scheme in 180 English schools, run by the *Mentoring and Befriending Foundation* (MBF, a national strategic body which focuses on influencing policy and supporting mentoring and befriending at all ages) over 2006 and 2007 (DCSF, 2008). In 2007 the DCSF further funded piloting of new types of peer mentoring, as part of an initiative to promote peer support in English schools (DCSF, Press notice 2007/0212). This comprised £3 million being shared between three major organisations involved with implementing and facilitating peer support in UK schools: MBF, Beat Bullying, and CHIPS (the school liaison part of the charity-run national telephone counselling line, *ChildLine*) - which at that time ran an extensive peer support programme. Other specialised organisations indicate the extensiveness of peer support use in the UK. For example, *Safety Net* is a charity which supports peer mediation and playground-based peer support in three regions in England, and *Mediation Hertfordshire* offers training in peer mediation to pupils in schools in another English region.

Peer support use internationally

No surveys of levels of use in other countries have been published. I provide here a review of evidence available upon extent of use in other countries, drawing upon published studies and information available from peer support organisations. Of course, this only provides a rough idea of use levels and for some countries this will be rougher than for others, as my access to publications and other information is limited to that available in English.

In the US a small number of case studies have been published, especially of peer mediation which Cowie and Wallace (2000) suggest is used in thousands of schemes in schools in every state. An early paper describes the *Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools* programme for middle and high schools, and the authors refer to their own years of experience implementing and evaluating such peer mediation systems (Benson & Benson, 1993). Another mediation system, *Mediator Mentors*, is described in later studies as a school-university partnership scheme involving cross-age peer mentoring (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003; Lane-Garon et al., 2005). From these papers it appears there is a history and range of other peer mediation programmes in the US. Other case studies have shown peer mediation use in relation to conflict resolution training (Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson & Schultz, 2002; Smith, S. W., Daunic, Miller & Robinson, 2002). Peer support has also been involved in anti-bullying programmes in US schools. The *Bully Busters* programme is a group-based bullying reduction intervention, targeted at teachers but involving pupil participants, that has been studied in several schools and has a teacher's manual available (e.g. Bell, Raczynski & Horne, 2010). There have also been organisations involved in peer support work in US schools. For example, *School Mediation Associates*, has worked with schools across the US on peer mediation systems (School Mediation Associates, n.d.).

In Canada, peer support case studies and systems have also been reported. An early case study describes a school where peer helpers were trained to support others in daily life as well as specific activities like orienting new pupils (Henrikson, 1991). The author cites Ray Carr (1989 and 1988b, as cited in Henrikson, 1991), who led a Peer Counselling Project, saying that that 'peer counsellors', 'peer facilitators' and 'peer helper' systems had become significantly used in Canadian schools over the previous decade, with over 2000 schemes existing in 1987. Peer mediation has also been reported in primary schools, with the aim of reducing playground aggression (Cunningham, Cunningham, Martorelli, Tran, Young & Zacharias, 1998). The authors note that although little studied, peer conflict resolution is widely used. A further example is a programme

where pupils were trained in conflict resolution skills, although this did not involve any peer support activities (Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Green & Langinski, 1997). There are also a number of organisations helping facilitate peer support in Canada. For example, the *Ontario Peer Helpers' Association*, has a membership of 200 schools and supports the use of peer mediation, peer anti-bullying work and other peer helping approaches (Ontario Peer Helpers' Association, n.d.).

Further, a Canadian based organisation, *Peer Resources Network*, lists a number of peer support programmes in schools in both Canada and the US including mediation, counselling, peer education, mentoring and programmes aimed at helping pupils transition to their new schools (Peer Resources Network, n.d.). Several of the systems cover schools across a regional area suggesting that peer support is indeed widely used, at least in certain areas. Overall, from the reported case studies, programme descriptions and organisations it can be surmised that peer support is used in a large number of American and Canadian schools.

The *Australian Peer Support Program*, where older secondary school pupils assist younger pupils with school transition, has apparently become quite popular in Australia and similar models have been adopted in New Zealand, Singapore and Scotland (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Marsh & Craven, 2009). The organisation which supports this programme, *Peer Support Australia*, suggests that over 1400 public, independent and catholic schools were members in 2009 (Peer Support Australia, n.d.). A report on the website of the comparable organisation in New Zealand, *The Peer Support Trust*, says that two-thirds of secondary schools use this peer support programme (Hynes, 2006). Other forms of peer support have also been studied e.g. peer mediation (Australia - McWilliam, 2010; New Zealand – Cameron & Dupuis, 1991, as cited in Cowie and Wallace, 2000) and an anti-bullying programme (Peterson & Rigby, 1999). The *Conflict Resolution Network* has also been involved in peer mediation in Australia (e.g. McMahon, 1997). In summary it appears that peer support is used in a fairly large number of schools in Australia and New Zealand.

In Finland, only one case study of peer support has been published but a national organisation and a national anti-bullying project suggest it is used quite extensively. A peer-led anti-bullying campaign has been reported which took initiative from pupils involved in a national peer counselling system organised by the *Mannerheim League for Child Welfare* (MLL) (Salmivalli, 2001). The MLL state on their website that they began peer support activities in Finnish schools since 1972, and have since developed a peer support program that encompasses 10, 000 peer students (Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, n.d.). The recent KiVa anti-bullying intervention funded by the Finnish Ministry of

Education and Culture also includes some peer support, with high-profile peers being paired with bullying victims; this is currently implemented in 82% of all schools in Finland (KiVa Koulu, n.d.).

Studies on peer support schemes used to tackle school bullying in Italy give the impression that peer support is not extensively used, and suggesting that befriending is the best fit with the Italian school system (Gini, 2004; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie, 2003). However, peer education has been used to tackle cyber-bullying in some schools (Menesini, Nocentini & Calussi, 2009; Pisano, Saturno & Pinna, 2009) and the PEPE anti-bullying intervention in schools is a cross-national study of peer support in three countries: Italy, Spain and the UK (Naylor, del Barrio, Iqbal, van der Muelen & Gutiérrez, 2009). Peer mediation has also been reported; the *Conflict Resolution Unlimited* institute mainly facilitates peer mediation in the US, Canada and Singapore, but has trained students in at least one (American) high school in Italy (Conflict Resolution Unlimited, n.d.).

In Spain there have been a small number of studies which overall suggest that peer support may be limited to use in anti-bullying campaigns e.g. an anti-bullying campaign featuring many elements of peer support, such as co-operative group work and mediation, a scheme designed to enhance the school community, or *convivencia*, where peer helpers particularly helped resolve bullying and other abuses of power, and a programme using pupil support teams and the PEPE anti-bullying intervention (Andrés, 2007, as cited in Cowie & Smith, 2010; Avilés Martínez, Torres Vicente & Vian Barón, 2008; Naylor et al., 2009; Ortega, Del Rey & Mora-Marchán, 2004). Additionally a peer mediation system, where peer supporters help resolve more general pupil conflicts, has been reported (Fernandez, Villaoslada & Funes, 2002, as cited in Cowie & Smith, 2010).

There is a small but growing body of research on peer support in schools in Japan. In the middle to late 1990s some Japanese schools began developing peer support approaches (Toda, 2005). Cross-curricular education, introduced in the high school curriculum in 2003 may have given teachers an opportunity to develop work aimed at pupils working together to improve their community, or to develop advanced peer support courses (Ikemoto, n.d.). A number of studies published in the journals of Japanese universities reveal that undergraduate students have also been involved in running peer support systems for school pupils. The *Japanese Peer Support Association* (JPSA) has been extremely active in supporting practitioner members to develop peer support systems, and in learning from practice in other countries e.g. through JPSA study programmes abroad. JPSA has regional directors and now peer support training is being

delivered to all teachers in some areas. The sources, variety of methods reported and the work of the JPSA indicate that peer support use is becoming increasingly widespread in Japan.

There are more limited indications of peer support use in other countries. A sole study reports the piloting of a peer counselling system in Saudi Arabia, but the authors note that there was no history of peer counselling in that country, and the pilot was to test its suitability (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999). It has also been asserted that South Africa and Norway are amongst the countries with the most experience in conflict resolution in schools (Baginsky, 2004), and a peer mediation system is reported across 44 schools in Norway (Diesen Paus, n.d.). Finally, a summary of an anti-bullying project developed by the *Mental Health Agency* in one of the big cities in the Netherlands shows that it included student mentoring (Junger-Tas, 1999).

Overall, it is reasonable to conclude that peer support is increasingly being used internationally. However, there is clearly a lack of research into the extent of peer support use in many countries. There is also a lack of work looking at the way that peer support is used in different countries. Peer support appeals internationally because of its very changeability; it is a framework of pastoral care that can be modified to suit salient needs and different school environments. I propose that peer support approaches in different countries are likely to take on different flavours. It has been seen that befriending may be the most suitable approach in the Italian context, and that the Japanese context has led to greater variations from the usual types of peer support (Gini, 2004; Menesini et al., 2003; Toda, 2005). An implication of this is that caution is needed in comparing findings from studies of peer support in schools in different countries, in particular those from Japan with those from the much larger research body from Western countries.

Reasons peer support is used

The nature of the pastoral care offered differs across schools and types of peer support. The type of peer support developed in a school will stem from staff's interpretation of the present needs of pupils and of what will suit the particular school environment. Cowie and Wallace (2000) strongly emphasise that schools ought to carry out a needs analysis before designing their system, as staff's beliefs about what will work and is desirable may well differ from pupils' own feelings.

As well as using peer support to meet children's needs, schools may be motivated by the need to meet educational agendas. For example, in the UK the legal frameworks and government initiatives which mean that schools must look after the emotional well-

being of pupils may encourage schools to create a peer support system to demonstrate that they are doing this, and to gain special status and extra funding. One reason schools in the CHIPS evaluation reported creating peer support was to link with the Healthy Schools government initiative (Smith & Watson, 2004). In the UK schools are regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and running peer support, as a way of offering additional pastoral care and promoting positive pupil relationships, may help schools receive positive inspection reports. A more general reason for setting up peer support is the practical advantage of freeing up staff time; if pupils are helping resolve other pupils' problems fewer will require staff involvement, meaning that staff are more available to deal with serious incidents or for other duties.

Looking at the specific pastoral care needs schools may address using peer support, research indicates three general areas: to benefit the whole school environment, to help target (vulnerable) pupils and to benefit the pupils acting as peer supporters. For example, within England schools report that these areas are their main reasons for running peer support (Houlston et al., 2009; Smith & Watson, 2004). Whole school benefits can be broken down into improving school climate, empowering pupils, improving social relationships within the school, and tackling bullying i.e. through prevention and reducing levels, intervening in bullying episodes or supporting victims. Helping target pupils may involve supporting vulnerable children as they are experiencing difficulties or putting systems in place that will help pupils who could face problems e.g. students transitioning from primary to secondary school. Peer supporter benefits refer to the notion that those pupils may develop skills, interpersonal benefits and have positive experiences as a result of their involvement.

It is clear that there are a multitude of reasons why schools might choose to run peer support, and many ways in which peer support may benefit pupils and the school as a community. The combination of the variety of methods of peer support and the many reasons it may be used, means that there is no single way of measuring the effectiveness of peer support.

Research findings on peer support in schools

I proposed at the beginning of this review that psychologists can play a role in ensuring that schools develop effective peer support. Central to this is the identification of the ways in which peer support schemes are actually successful in practice, and the factors influencing this. All peer support schemes share the general aim to benefit schools, but

such a broad concept lacks definition, and cannot be measured. Therefore determining how effective schemes are requires evaluating whether positive change was achieved for specific outcome areas, linked to the types of benefits schools hope to gain. Since schools may have multiple aims for their scheme, studies may evaluate multiple outcome areas using a range of measures, both quantitative and qualitative. I will now review existing research findings on how effective peer support schemes have been in terms of meeting the three areas of pastoral care schools may target: the whole school environment, target pupils, and peer supporters.

Benefits for the whole school environment

On the whole teachers and pupils report that peer support has a positive impact on school life. In the evaluation of the DfES Anti-Bullying Pack, Smith and Samara (2003) surveyed schools across England on their satisfaction with a range of anti-bullying interventions on a five point scale (1 not at all satisfied to 5 extremely satisfied). Overall peer listening approaches rated 3.9, befriending 3.6 and mediation 3.5, which were similar ratings to other interventions included.

English schools referred directly to 'school ethos', or factors that contribute to school climate such as student relationships and bullying issues (Houlston et al., 2009). School climate describes the total environmental quality within a school (Hanif & Smith, 2010). It has previously been taken as pertaining to the atmosphere within a school, attitudes shared by the whole school population, and the quality and frequency of interactions amongst and between staff and pupils (Hanif & Smith, 2010; Koth, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2008; Kuperminc, Leadbeater & Blatt, 2001). Some researchers have specifically emphasised the social aspect of school climate, relating to interpersonal relationships.

School climate influences the norms of behaviour within a school, in particular attitudes towards anti-social behaviour such as bullying and violence (Hanif & Smith, 2010; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). School climate also acts as a protective factor from risk e.g. from school bullying or self-criticism (Hanif & Smith, 2010; Kuperminc et al., 2001; Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003). There is also some evidence that perceptions of climate are moderated by age and gender; students perceive climate less positively as they advance through the school years (Way, Reddy & Rhodes, 2007) and girls may perceive school climate more positively (Koth et al., 2008; Loukas, Suzuki & Horton, 2006; Way et al., 2007).

Peer support may influence the quality of the school environment through a number of mechanisms:

1. Students will perceive that their school is a caring place, either through receiving support and experiencing positive outcomes or through seeing that their school and peers offer this support
2. Pupils who provide support will contribute to and directly experience the creation of a positive school environment
3. Staff benefits from the system will lead to a more positive school environment
4. The norms of behaviour in the schools will become more positive
5. Social relationships will generally improve
6. Pupil conflicts, and bullying issues, will be addressed, leading to a safer school environment

If peer support is successful the students who receive support will experience positive outcomes and hopefully appreciate this help. They may see it as a demonstration that their school is a caring place, and particularly that their fellow pupils care. In studies of peer support the student users typically report that they find it helpful. In Naylor and Cowie's (1999) Prince's Trust survey of 51 secondary schools and colleges in the UK, pupil users commonly said that it showed that somebody cared. This study included a very large sample of pupils, and only included schools where peer support had been in place for at least one year suggesting that there would have been time for peer support to become embedded and have an impact. In the follow-up study of 35 schools pupil users again reported finding peer support helpful (Cowie et al., 2002).

In their later review of peer support in 19 English schools Smith and Watson (2004) found that head teachers typically commented that school climate had improved, and that the majority of student users said that it had helped them a lot or a bit; 94% of primary school users and 89% of secondary school users. The majority also said they would use it again, with most of the rest feeling not sure; 75% of primary school users and 67% of secondary school users. However, it must be noted that this study only reviewed the schools at one point in time, does not provide information about the length peer support had been running, and that as schools were often using several other pastoral care initiatives it is hard to say that general findings on climate are attributable to peer support.

The evaluation report of the first government funded MBF pilot scheme also showed that the vast majority of mentee students enjoyed their involvement in the programme (DCSF, 2008). From the more recent MBF pilot a representative sample of 24 secondary and eight primary schools were independently evaluated using student and co-ordinator surveys. The report shows that 62% of mentored at-risk pupils reported that

general life-satisfaction had increased and that there was a 77% improvement on relatedness – the feeling that others are caring and supportive (MBF, 2011). An advantage of this study is that it was longitudinal; schools completed the surveys at two time points, particularly meaning that children who had been mentored in that time could be identified. However, the report notes that findings were only from six months after peer support was created so the full impact may not yet have been evident in all schools.

A comprehensive mixed-methods evaluation of peer support in four schools in Australia, using a pre- and post- test design with control pupils, found benefits for users of a programme designed to ease school transition for year 7 pupils (aged 11 to 14) in secondary school (Ellis, 2004). The experimental group made significant gains in general school self-concept and on verbal self-concept between time one and time two (with six months between the time points), and which were maintained until time three (three months after time two), and significant gains on honesty/trustworthiness compared with controls. Whilst no significant difference was seen compared to controls on active involvement at school, pupil users scored significantly higher on school enjoyment at time three. Further, in a mixed-methods, longitudinal one year case study of a peer counselling scheme in an all-girl English secondary school, 83% of pupil users in year 7 (aged 11 to 12) reported that the scheme had helped them ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ and 75% of year 8 pupils (aged 12 to 13) that it helped ‘a little’ (Houlston & Smith, 2009). Year 7 pupils’ comments generally showed they were supportive of the scheme, that it gave them an alternative source of support and made them feel safer, whilst year 8 pupils had concerns over the availability of peer supporters.

In a single time point case study of a befriending service in a Northern Irish primary school, staff said the scheme had increased pupil inclusion in social activities in the playground and classroom, and that target pupils had a greater sense of belonging (McElearney, Roosmale-Cocq, Scott & Stephenson, 2008). The authors acknowledge however that findings from this study cannot be generalised; it is at one time point only and further, it is unclear how long after scheme implementation the evaluation was conducted. Another case study at only one time point was conducted on a peer mediation programme in Australia, where all staff and students were trained in conflict resolution skills and year 6 pupils (aged 11 to 12 years) additionally trained to become mediators (McWilliam, 2010). Pupils who used the peer mediation process reported an increased satisfaction with school processes and a sense that the school environment had been enhanced.

Students who do not receive support, but who are aware of the scheme, may still see it as a demonstration that their school is concerned with their happiness, and that their

peers care. Naylor and Cowie (1999) found that pupils reported benefits of peer support to the whole school. Smith and Watson (2004) found that the majority of students, including those who had not used the service, felt that having peer support was a good idea; 72% of pupils overall. Similarly over half of the students in the all-girl case study school felt that having the scheme was a good idea, with year 7 pupils (aged 11 to 12) being significantly more likely to say this compared to older students in year 8 (aged 12 to 13) and year 9 (aged 13 to 14) (Houlston & Smith, 2009). In the recent MBF pilot study, at-risk but non-mentored pupils also showed a slight increase in school satisfaction, and staff felt peer support had created a mutually respectful school climate (MBF, 2011). Avilés Martínez, Torres Vicente and Vian Barón (2008) provide a case study of a peer support programme in a Spanish school, where students valued the service and teachers reported their belief that the programme was capable of improving school *convivencia*, the way that members of the school community live and work together in harmony. In a review of a peer support programme to aid transition to high school in three Australian secondary schools the general student population in the experimental group showed significant gains in school self-concept and qualitative findings included the theme of school citizenship (Ellis et al., 2009). This study was particularly comprehensive as it surveyed pupils at three time points over two years and used mixed-methods to obtain a full picture of the effectiveness of the programme.

Within some Japanese approaches the distinction between pupils who receive peer support and other pupils is not as clear. The 'educational' or 'community-cultivating' peer support approaches are particularly designed to foster a positive whole-school climate (Cowie, 2009; Ikemoto, n.d.). In these approaches all pupils are trained in peer support skills and encouraged to support each other in daily life, making pupils both peer supporters and pupil users. There is some evidence that pupils enjoy and benefit from this experience and that it nurtures a positive school climate. For example, increased self-esteem has been reported amongst trained pupils (Ikemoto, n.d.; Ochi, 2008, as cited in Cowie, 2009). Cowie (2009) also reports on peer support programmes in Japan which aimed to alleviate group fears and anxieties, like the Question and Answer Handout method described earlier. These approaches mean that peer supporters help individuals who raise a problem but that all pupils in the school can be considered supported as they can read about the issue and the advice. An example is given of a junior high school where the Q&A method helped create a supportive ethos in the school (Kawata, 1996, as cited in Cowie, 2009).

The students who provide the peer support service should have the positive experience of making a difference in their school. Smith and Watson (2004) found that staff reported benefits for the peer supporters, including being empowered and involved in their school. In the earlier MBF pilot scheme pupils enjoyed acting as mentors and in the later one 60% of peer mentors felt they had made a difference to the lives of other pupils (DCSF, 2008; MBF, 2011). Cowie and Olafsson (2000) evaluated a peer counselling service introduced to supplement a whole school anti-bullying policy, and found that peer supporters commented on the strong sense that they had made a difference and that being trusted to take responsibility on bullying had a positive impact. In the later case study in the all-girl secondary school peer counsellors reported concerns about scheme implementation but were all very positive about taking part (Houlston & Smith, 2009). Peer mediators in an Australian school commented on increased satisfaction with school processes, a sense that the school environment had been enhanced, and that they felt proud and responsible for helping others (McWilliam, 2010). For peer supporters in the evaluation of a programme in four Australian schools there were mixed findings related to school climate; general school self-concept and school enjoyment were higher than for pupils in one control group but not another (Ellis, 2004).

Staff as well as pupils typically report feeling that peer support is a good idea, and that it is helpful (Cowie et al., 2002; Houlston & Smith, 2009; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). In the CHIPS schools 94% staff felt it was a good idea to have the peer support service, and in the English all-girl case study 79% thought the peer counselling scheme was a good idea (Houlston & Smith, 2009; Smith & Watson, 2004). Peer support schemes can reduce the workload of staff (e.g. Naylor & Cowie, 1999). A main benefit identified from peer mediation is that it reduces the amount of time staff members have to spend resolving conflicts (Benson & Benson, 1993). For example, staff in an Australian school using a peer mediation programme reported experiencing reduced workload, emotional burden and stress, and increased job satisfaction (McWilliam, 2010). Such staff benefits could mean that they are more able to deal with serious incidents in a timely and effective manner, which should also improve school climate. Seeing the work of the peer supporters could also improve staff perceptions of students, demonstrating that students may act as a force for good.

Less direct mechanisms which enable peer support to have a positive effect on whole school environment are via norms of behaviour and general social relationships. Peer support has the power to influence the norms of behaviour within a school. It has been described as a “form of lived morality” (Cowie & Smith, 2010, p. 180); peer

supporters act as role-models within a school, demonstrating a caring attitude and possibly acting as defenders for victims of bullying. In the Prince's Trust follow-up survey peer supporters perceived themselves to be role models, and teachers noted that these pupils had become better school citizens (Cowie et al., 2002). Over time this may encourage greater pro-social behaviour in general within the school community.

Peer support can also help create positive relationships amongst pupils, and between staff and pupils. Peer support largely depends upon positive social relationships between peer supporters and the children they help. Befriending approaches involve peer supporters improving social relations for isolated pupils, and mentoring and counselling approaches involve nurturing and empathetic interactions. It is likely that pupil users may feel more confident in their social interactions with other pupils generally as a result. Peer supporters may also develop more positive relationships with peers generally and also with staff.

One of the benefits staff reported for peer supporters in the CHIPS programme was that they were better at making friends (Smith & Watson, 2004). Programme co-ordinators in the earlier MBF peer mentoring pilot also reported that it improved students' social skills and peer supporters reported gains relating to social relationships (DCSF, 2008). In the peer support programme across three schools in Australia the general student population in the experimental group and the student leaders showed gains in co-operative teamwork and student connectedness (Ellis et al., 2009). In the earlier evaluation of a programme across four Australian schools, pupils in the experimental group significantly gained on opposite-sex relation self-concept scores, but findings on co-operative teamwork and peer support measures compared to controls were unclear (Ellis, 2004). Peer supporters in this study scored higher on both same-sex and opposite-sex relation self-concept scores compared with control pupils. Both peer supporters and pupil users in a peer mediation case study felt that their relationships with other pupils had been enhanced (McWilliam, 2010).

Finally, pupil-staff relationships may improve as a result of peer support. Staff co-ordinators are involved in training and supervision with the peer supporters, requiring supportive relationships. Out of 14 peer counsellors, eight in the all-girls case study school in England commented that involvement had led to stronger relationships with the staff running the scheme, whilst their social self-esteem increased significantly compared to matched controls (though their social skills did not) (Houlston & Smith, 2009). The lower demand for staff to intervene in pupil issues around the school generally may also mean

that they are more able to develop positive relationships with other staff and pupils, as they will be freer to spend more time helping students with more serious incidents.

However, when peer counselling was piloted in an all-boys secondary school in Saudi Arabia some staff members had negative views towards the scheme, feeling that it had led to pupils not respecting their teachers and thinking that teachers did not understand their problems (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999). Out of ten staff members interviewed only two felt it had improved staff-pupil relationships and only four that it had improved pupil relationships generally. This study was rigorous in that it surveyed staff and pupils before the scheme began and at several points until the end of the academic year, and used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The negative staff comments seem likely to reflect the difficulty of adapting what the authors consider a typically Western system into a Saudi Arabian school, as it is noted that the ethos of counselling is alien to the national culture. Improved social relationships within a school may therefore depend upon the type of peer support approach and the national culture.

Social relationships, and social competence, are particularly important within a school as they act as protective factors for vulnerable children (Haskett, Nears, Ward & McPherson, 2006; Schultz, Tharp-Taylor, Haviland & Jaycox, 2009). Social skills, loneliness and peer rejection are also risk factors for victimisation in bullying (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Nansel et al., 2001; Schafer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke & Schulz, 2005; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006, James, 2010). Some children who bully others may also have poor social skills, leading to difficulties in managing positive relationships, although others have advanced social competence which enables them to manipulate others (Sutton, Smith & Swettenham, 1999; Vaillancourt, Hymel & McDougall, 2003; James, 2010). Tackling bullying is one reason that schools may adopt peer support, and if it has a positive impact on bullying issues then the whole school environment will certainly improve. However there is mixed evidence that peer support does improve school bullying and safety. As school bullying is a large issue within itself I examine this mechanism through which peer support can improve school environments separately below.

Impact on school bullying and safety

Peer support is of particular importance for psychologists because of its contribution to the universal issue of child welfare. The necessity to protect children from harm, as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1991) means that school bullying and its prevention remain issues of concern to both researchers and practitioners.

School bullying is a distinct form of aggressive behaviour. It shares some essential components with other forms of aggression, the intention to cause harm, a harmful outcome and involving direct or indirect acts, but uniquely involves repetition over time and a power imbalance between the aggressor(s) and victim(s) (see e.g. Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano & Slee, 1999; Smith, 2004; James, 2010). It is difficult to say how common bullying is in schools as studies do not always use the same definition of bullying and different methodologies can yield different findings (James, 2010). Peer and teacher nominations tend not to correspond well with self-report information (Österman, Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, Kaukiainen, Heusmann, & Fraczek, 1994; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman & Kaukiainen, 1996) and observations produce higher rates than surveys (Pepler, Craig, Yuile & Connolly, 2004). Large scale surveys have reported quite wide ranges of rates.

In the UK the national Tellus surveys of well-being in children in England indicated that 28.8% children had experienced bullying in 2009-10 and 50.1% in 2008-09 (DCSF, 2010). However the survey question was altered in the later questionnaire to prevent children who had been bullied more than one year ago from answering positively, which may explain the large decrease in the percentage of victimisation reported.

The World Health Organisation's Health Behavior in School-Aged Children 2001/02 survey of 35 countries found average rates of victimisation (the proportion of pupils who reported being bullied) and bullying (the proportion of pupils who reported bullying others) were both 11%, and a review of surveys in individual countries reported victimisation rates of 9 to 32%, and bullying rates of 3 to 27% (Craig & Harel, 2004, as cited in Salmivalli, 2010; Stassen Berger, 2007). Two studies have reported cross-national trends in bullying based upon data from the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) for 11-15 year old pupils. Data from 27 countries show that pupils bullying others overall steadily decreased over time from 19.3% in 1993/94 to 10.6% in 2005/06; decreases were found in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, the Baltic countries and most of Western Europe (Molcho, Craig, Due, Pickett, Harel-Fisch, Overpeck and the HBSC Bullying Writing Group, 2009). In North America and English-speaking countries in Europe increases or no change were found, but it is noted that in the UK and Ireland prevalence was low at baseline. Analysis of HBSC data from 40 countries in 2005/06 found average rates of 10.7% for bullying others, 12.6% of being victimised and 3.6% of being both a bully and a victim, with prevalence rates generally being lower in North-West European countries (Craig, Harel-Fisch, Fogel-Grinvald, Dostaler, Hetland et al., 2009). Overall it can be said that bullying is likely to

happen in any school in any country, and so in theory peer support could be used as an anti-bullying approach in any nation.

However, the nature of bullying differs across countries. There can be multiple words for bullying behaviour within individual countries, such as bullying, harassment, picking on, teasing and victimisation in the UK. In Western countries bullying usually involves older children directly physically and verbally victimising younger pupils (Craig et al., 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999). In contrast *wang-ta* in Korea and *ijime* in Japan typically involve social exclusion of pupils by large groups (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002; Koo, Kwak & Smith, 2008; Morita, Soeda, Soeda & Taki, 1999). Potentially peer support may need to take on different approaches to tackle bullying effectively in different countries.

Why might we expect peer support to address school bullying? There are a number of reasons why it could indeed have a positive impact on bullying, but there are also reasons why it might not have a great effect. Indirectly bullying levels could be reduced as a result of the other improvements in a school's climate; more children may be protected from victimisation through better quality friendships and increased social skills, and staff may be more able to deal with bullying incidents as they happen. The nature of some types of peer support can also mean they provide pupils with strategies to help with bullying. Mediation approaches in particular train pupils in conflict resolution skills that may prevent conflicts escalating into bullying. Peer education can be used to provide pupils with information about bullying and how to cope when it happens. Other systems like mentoring and counselling offer pupils an additional person they could disclose bullying to, whom they may feel more comfortable talking to than a member of staff. Peer support could also help to support victims of bullying by combating the effects it has. Victims may experience social isolation, loneliness, poor self-esteem and a greater tendency towards depression and anxiety (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Craig, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). By helping children integrate with their peers and providing emotional support peer supporters could tackle these negative effects.

Peer support may also mobilise other pupils to help bullying victims. School bullying is a social process that happens within the context of the peer group; the way children respond to bullying is influenced by others (Cowie & Sharp, 1994; Craig & Pepler, 1995; Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi & Franzoni, 2008; Menesini, Melan & Pignatti, 2000; Pepler, Craig & Roberts, 1998; Salmivalli, et al., 1996; Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 1998). Bullying episodes involve other participant roles besides bullies and victims; *assistants* do things that help the bully, such as acting as a lookout, *reinforcers* encourage

the bullying, *defenders* try to stop it and *outsiders/bystanders* neither encourage nor intervene when bullying occurs (Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli, 1999). Peer support, as part of peer-led anti-bullying initiatives, can aim to change the behaviour of bystanders so that they become defenders.

However, there are reasons why we might not expect peer support to have an impact upon bullying or at least not as great an impact as desired. The main one is that by its nature peer support largely does not involve pupils who are bullies. Befriending, mentoring and counselling offer social and emotional support to victims but do not directly involve the bullies. Although this might enable victims to cope better, report bullying to staff and thus stop the bullying from continuing, it does not prevent it from happening in the future; bullies may simply move onto another victim or staff actions to stop the bullying may not be effective long-term. Mediation approaches seem most likely to directly involve both bullies and victims, hopefully helping the pupils reach a peaceful solution and following it up afterwards to ensure the bullying has not re-started. Approaches that target the whole school population, such as peer education and other peer-led anti-bullying campaigns, will also reach pupils who bully others but would need to be particularly effective in changing pro-bullying attitudes. Peer support that is designed to target bullying may not be effective unless part of a whole-school anti-bullying approach with other strategies.

Research suggests that peer support may have a positive effect on bullying, but not as great an impact as desired. The Prince's Trust study (Naylor & Cowie, 1999, p. 471) reported that the "idea of a "caring school" was mentioned by almost all (at least 87%) teachers, by 75% of the peer supporters and by at least two-fifths of the potential users of these systems". Smaller numbers perceived that it gave teachers greater time to do other things and that bullying was reduced. However, of pupils bullied in the current year, 23% year 7s (ages not reported but year 7 pupils are usually aged 11 to 12 in England) and 13% year 8s (usually aged 12 to 13), only 23% of the year 7s and 18% of the year 8s had told a peer supporter. The authors suggested that the incidence of bullying was similar to that of other studies, meaning that peer support had not reduced bullying. However most victims had turned to a parent, teacher or friend; that over 50% of pupils felt able to tell a teacher indicates a fairly positive school ethos towards reporting bullying. Peer supporters in the follow-up study also suggested that peer support improved school quality of life, and teachers that it meant victims of bullying were happy to tell other pupils and commented that schemes were commended in Ofsted inspections (Cowie et al., 2002).

Smith and Watson (2004) encountered a lot of anecdotal evidence within the 19 CHIPS schools studied that peer support had a positive impact, including fewer friendship problems, school feeling safer and less complaints from lunchtime supervisors about pupil behaviour. Bullying levels in the schools were not surveyed but when asked whether peer support was helping to reduce bullying opinion was split; 52% staff and 43% pupils said that it was, with 45% of all participants feeling unsure.

In her review of peer mediation in schools Baginsky (2004) summarises evidence that this approach can create a safe school environments and reduce conflicts, and that while it will not stop bullying it can enable pupils to develop coping strategies and foster a climate where bullying is no longer acceptable. The author notes however that peer mediation schemes cannot work alone; they must be part of a whole-school approach to conflicts.

In terms of pre and post measures of bullying levels, studies in the UK indicate that peer support does not reduce bullying. Cowie and Olafsson (2000) administered the Olweus bullying questionnaire before the anti-bullying peer counselling scheme started and 7.5 months on; there was a high level of bullying reported pre and post test, with no significant difference found. However the number of bullied pupils that had not told anybody decreased from 39% to 30%, and the pre-existent high levels of aggression in the school may have limited the possible impact of peer support. In the English peer counselling case study (Houlston & Smith, 2009) there was no difference across two points in the levels of pupils reporting either recent victimisation or bullying behaviour. Worryingly, reported recent bullying behaviour increased significantly for year 8 students, although victimisation did not and both remained the same for years 7 and 9. Accordingly, in survey responses, year 8 pupils thought more bullying occurred than year 7 and 9 pupils, but all pupils showed a significant increase in their perception of the school's anti-bullying action. In the two-phase evaluation of the more recent MBF pilot it was shown that 36% of mentored children had been bullied 'sometimes' or 'often' compared with 22% of non-mentored children, suggesting that a great proportion of bullied children had accessed support (MBF, 2011). Staff largely said that they did not see any change in the number of bullying incidents overall, but 63% of the pupils who had been amongst the 'most bullied' at the start of the study and went on to be mentored said that their experience of bullying had reduced.

Case studies in other countries with pre- and post- measures have also yielded mixed evidence on bullying. Peterson and Rigby (1999) evaluated an anti-bullying programme at an Australian secondary school, which used several aspects of peer

support, including an anti-bullying committee, a peer helper group, a public-speaking group, a poster group and a drama group. This was a robust, longitudinal study where measures were conducted at the programme start and two years later; overall there was no decline in reported victimisation, but it did decrease significantly amongst year 7 pupils (ages not reported but Year 7 pupils in Australia are usually aged 12 to 13) and older pupils in years 10 and 11 (usually aged 15 to 16, and 16 to 17) had more positive feelings about anti-bullying work. Within comments from the children, 25% were very supportive about the campaign but others were sceptical that it could be stopped through any school intervention. Two studies of a university-school peer mediation programme in the US reported on student perceptions of school safety (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003; Lane-Garon et al., 2005). In the earlier study percentage increases were found on four items relating to school safety and climate, whilst in the later study students acting as mediators were found to have more positive perceptions of school safety than non-mediators. In Canada, a peer mediation programme in three primary schools had a positive impact; mediators resolved 90% of the playground conflicts they intervened in and observations showed that physically aggressive behaviour reduced by 51-65% (Cunningham, et al., 1998). This reduction was still evident in follow-up measures a year after the programme commenced.

Studies using both pre- and post- measures and controlled comparisons again have found mixed evidence on the impact of peer support on bullying. In the review of a transition peer support programme in four schools in Australia, the pupil users and peer supporters showed a significant decrease on pro-bully attitudes compared with controls (Ellis, 2004). For peer supporters there was also an increase on pro-victim attitudes, whilst for pupil users there was a suggested sleeper effect on this measure. In Finland, a peer-led anti-bullying campaign, involving eight peer counsellors who emphasised each individual's ability to help with bullying through events and activities, was especially effective amongst female pupils (Salmivalli, 2001). Five weeks after the campaign female pupils reported decreases in self and peer reported bullying and an increase on attitudes relating to their ability to affect bullying situations, whereas for male pupils there was an increase on pro-bullying attitudes. However, it must be noted that the campaign was only a week in length, and the study follow-up period was relatively short.

A more longitudinal study of an anti-bullying befriending programme in two Italian secondary schools over one year found that levels of bullying and pro-bullying behaviours stayed the same within the experimental classes, but increased in the control classes in the same period (Menesini et al., 2003). This study further looked at the participant roles

children took; in the control group the proportion of pupils who were bullies, reinforcers and assistants increased in the control group but did not greatly differ for the experimental classes. The proportion of children who were defenders increased slightly for the experimental group and remained the same for the control group, but interestingly only 45% of the children who acted as defenders in the experimental group initially remained in this role at time two. Finally, the proportion of victims increased to a larger extent in the control group but not significantly so. Overall this study indicates that peer support may prevent a bullying situation from worsening. However, findings from the first year of a longitudinal case study of a peer education approach to cyberbullying in an Italian secondary school show that cybervictimisation was significantly reduced in the experimental classes, and that some of the most common cyberbullying behaviours decreased in this group compared to control classes (Menesini et al., 2009).

The evaluation of a peer support programme to help school transition in three Australian schools found that pupils in the experimental group reported significantly lower pro-bully attitudes, whilst pro-victim attitudes did not increase initially but did increase in the last time period of the study (Ellis et al., 2009).

Preliminary results only are available from the cross-national PEPE anti-bullying intervention, involving peer support, where an experimental and a control school were studied in each of England, Italy and Spain. Results from the controlled comparison in Spain thus far indicate that both staff and teachers in the peer support school felt it had a positive impact upon victims of bullying, peer supporters and school life, and that some aspects of peer victimisation, involving mobile phones/internet and sexual harassment, were significantly reduced (del Barrio, Barrios, Granizo, van der Muelen, Andres & Gutiérrez, 2011; Naylor et al., 2009).

Controlled comparison studies also looked at school safety more generally. Cowie and Oztug (2008) compared two schools with peer support with two without and concluded that there was little evidence peer support increased students' sense of safety. In a controlled comparison study peer support was not found to be linked with improved school climate. Cowie, Hutson, Oztug and Myers (2008) compared two secondary schools in England with peer support and two without; pupils in control schools actually reported feeling safer in different areas of the school than pupils in schools with peer support. A large-scale evaluation of the *Students for Peace* violence-prevention intervention in the US, involving peer mediators and peer helpers, studied eight middle schools randomly divided into experimental and control schools (Kelder, Frankowski, Murray, Zhang & Orpinas, 2000). Little or no effect of the programme was found on measures relating to

conflict at school, such as reducing aggressive behaviours and fights and missing classes due to feeling unsafe at school. Another peer mediation study using a comprehensive delayed-treatment design with three US secondary schools over four years found a significant decrease in the mean number of disciplinary incidents reported in one school only, suggesting that school violence decreased as a result of the conflict resolution and peer mediation programme (Smith, S. W. et al., 2002).

Individual case studies of peer support as an anti-bullying method at only one time point do however suggest it can have a positive impact. Cowie and Hutson (2005) outline an email peer support system in an all-boys school in the UK that was developed after a case of physical bullying. The authors indicate that the scheme was successful in that it helped create a more caring school climate, and forced pupils to consider how their actions affected others, but no information is given on its specific impact on bullying levels or on victims of bullying. In the evaluation of an anti-bullying befriending scheme staff reported reduced bullying incidents, that younger pupils felt less anxiety about older pupils, and that children had greater awareness of bullying (McElearney et al., 2008). However, no evidence is provided about the actual levels of bullying within the school or how long the scheme had been running at the point of evaluation, which limits the usefulness of these findings.

In conclusion, there is mixed evidence on the effectiveness of peer support as an anti-bullying and school safety approach. It must be borne in mind though that this could be due to poor implementation of peer support systems or methodological issues within studies. Studies of peer support are largely qualitative and short-term. It can take a long time for peer support to become embedded within a school and become part of the school culture. This might mean that an impact on bullying, particularly bullying levels, would not be seen until the scheme has been operational for longer than those previously studied.

Benefits for target pupils

As well as benefitting all pupils through an improved school environment, peer support can benefit target vulnerable children. As seen above, this can be specifically victims of bullying, but peer support can help pupils with other difficulties. For example, peer counsellors may help their peers with issues like transitioning to a new school, academic problems, friendship conflicts, family problems and dealing with puberty.

Research shows that pupil users generally do find peer support helpful. For schools in the CHIPS programme the majority of primary (94%) and secondary (88%) users said that peer support had helped them a bit or a lot, and that they would use it

again, 75% and 67% respectively (Smith & Watson, 2004). The Prince's Trust survey (Naylor & Cowie, 1999) found that pupils who used the schemes, peer supporters and teachers all felt that peer support had a positive impact on users. The most common benefits were: providing someone who listens, providing strength to overcome a problem and a demonstration that somebody in the school cares. However, it should be noted that lower percentages of pupil users reported these benefits than in the peer supporter and teacher groups. The follow-up study (Cowie et al., 2002) found that only a small proportion (7.8% girls, 8.5% boys) of pupils who had been bullied in the last two years had used their peer support scheme, but that 87% of those who had felt it was useful or very useful. Positive reasons for usefulness included that it helps to talk to a peer and confidentiality. In the MBF pilot at-risk mentored pupils showed gains in self-esteem, moving them 80% closer to the national norm, as well as the life satisfaction and relatedness benefits reported earlier (MBF, 2011).

However, findings for year 7 pupils (aged 11 to 14) in the four Australian schools participating in a transition peer support programme were mixed. There was some indication of a sleeper effect on increasing self-confidence but there was no evidence of increases in self-esteem (Ellis, 2004). For resourcefulness significant gains compared with controls were shown for open thinking and stress management, pupils with initially low levels on support seeking strategies improved in this area, sleeper effects were suggested for experimental pupils on self-efficacy, problem avoidance strategies and time efficiency, but there was no effect on measures of problem solving and coping with change.

Case studies of individual schools support these findings. Dearden (1998) studied a peer mentoring scheme in an English secondary school and found that 90% of mentees (ten pupils in year 6, ages not reported but year 6 pupils in England are usually aged 9 to 10) agreed or strongly agreed with statements related to positive personal development, and 80% with statements related to enhanced interpersonal skills. Peer supporters in the befriending service in Northern Ireland said they had learnt about themselves and others, and increased their knowledge and skills, and this was supported from statements by school staff (McElearney et al., 2008). Cowie and Olafsson (2000) interviewed users of a peer support service in a secondary school; four found it helpful but three felt that it had not made them feel safer at school. Those that found it helpful reported the benefits of having a peer to talk to and the perceived protection from peer supporters' presence. Over 30% of year 7s in an all-girls English secondary school had used the peer support scheme at least once and 83% of these felt it had helped a lot or a bit, whereas only 11% of year

8s reported using the service and 75% felt it had helped a bit (none that it helped a lot) (Houlston & Smith, 2009).

Pupils who had used the peer mediation process in an Australian case study reported that they had increased empathy, decreased stress and had developed skills in communication, anger management and conflict resolution (McWilliam, 2010). An email-based peer counselling service in Japan has also been described as having benefits for adolescent mental health, with users evaluating the service positively (Naofumi & Takayo, 2006, as cited in Cowie, 2009). Pupil users of the pilot peer counselling scheme in Saudi Arabia were significantly satisfied with the system; the majority made positive statements about the outcomes they experienced (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999). Pupils seemed to particularly appreciate the value of having a peer to talk to and felt it was not embarrassing to talk to peer so they would recommend it.

Although peer support has benefits for pupils who use it, stigma may sometimes be attached to doing so. In a qualitative study of anti-bullying peer counselling services in two schools, around a third of pupil users, 34%, said they would not disclose using peer support to a friend for reasons including that it would result in them being stigmatised, the bullying problem was too personal and they did not trust their friends (Boulton, 2005). Although these findings were from one time point only, the schemes had been running for over two years suggesting that they were effective and there had been sufficient time for the services to become embedded in the school cultures. Related to this, in schools which participated in the follow-up to the Prince's Trust survey a common difficulty in running the system was trying to minimise the stigma linked to going to peer supporters with problems (Cowie et al., 2002). Further, pupils may feel uncomfortable using peer support. Pupils in three secondary schools using peer support schemes in Scotland largely did not say they would talk to a peer supporter; reasons for this included not knowing them well enough, it would be embarrassing and they might laugh at them, as well as practical reasons about knowing when and where to see them (Vincent, Warden & Duffy, 2007).

Benefits for peer supporters

The pupils who provide support can also receive direct benefits. Staff, pupil users and peer supporters in the Prince's Trust survey all perceived that it benefited the peer supporters (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Skill acquisition and demonstrating that they cared were the most frequent benefits cited by all participant groups, although pupil users were less likely to cite skill acquisition. The follow-up study (Cowie et al., 2002) with 35 of the original schools identified the perceived benefits for peer supporters in greater detail. Benefits reported

were specific skills, as well as social and personal development. Skills mentioned by peer supporters were active listening and the ability to have empathy with a fellow pupil. These, and their work's success, were linked to improved self-confidence, the experience of "being there" for others, a gratifying sense of responsibility and the perception that they were a positive role model. Teachers reported that peer supporters gained in self-confidence, a sense of usefulness and became better citizens within the school.

In an initial pilot study (Cowie, 1998) 25 peer supporters and nine teachers across nine schools (two primary, seven secondary) reported both positive and negative impact. As in later studies benefits reported were increased self-confidence, a sense of responsibility and the feeling of being a positive force within their school, but peer supporters also mentioned a sense of hostility and ridicule from their peers.

Smith and Watson (2004) also reported that peer supporters may experience teasing; some peer supporters reported pupils pretending to need help or teasing them because of the caps or bibs they wore to distinguish them. Generally though, peer supporters in the schools in the CHIPS evaluation had great enthusiasm about their role, and staff and peer supporters felt that it led to the development of interpersonal and transferable skills, improved self-confidence, a sense of empowerment and responsibility. In particular it seemed to benefit peer supporters with initial low self-esteem.

Only positive impact on peer supporters is reported in the recent MBF pilot study. More than three-quarters of peer mentors said they gained confidence, 71% said they learnt more about themselves, 70% said they felt better about themselves, and most secondary school peer mentors agreed that the experience would look good on their CV (MBF, 2011).

UK case studies further suggest benefits for trained pupils. Peer supporters in the English all-girls secondary school study also reported that training and their role provided them with interpersonal and communication skills, and a pre and post test with 14 peer supporters and 14 matched controls found a significant increase in social self-esteem (Houlston & Smith, 2009). However no differences were found in shame acknowledgement and displacement, or in general social skills. Peer counsellors also indicated that the service had been subjected to misuse by some pupils. In an earlier study of a peer mentoring programme in an English secondary school 19 peer mentors in year 10 (ages not reported but year 10 pupils in England are usually aged 15 to 16) rated themselves on perceived benefits from the scheme (Dearden, 1998). The majority, 70%, agreed or strongly agreed with statements relating to improved interpersonal skills, and 65% with statements related to personal development. Cowie and Olafsson (2000) also found that

peer counsellors in their case study school commented on the skills involved in delivering peer support.

In Australia, members of the student anti-bullying committee in a mixed peer support anti-bullying campaign expressed that it had improved their self-esteem and peer relations (Petersen & Rigby, 1999). In the evaluation of peer support in four Australian schools peer supporters gained on leadership ability, self-confidence, self-esteem, physical appearance, social effectiveness and quality seeking. They partially gained on open thinking, but showed no gains on measures of coping strategies, coping with change, time efficiency, stress management or self-efficacy (Ellis, 2004). Within the evaluation of the pilot peer counselling scheme in Saudi Arabia peer counsellors were shown to improve on all aspects of self-concept and experience some positive change on personal development parameters, whilst in focus groups the pupils commented on increased self-awareness, better social relationships, and improved listening and communication skills (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999).

A peer helping programme in Canada also showed measured advances for peer supporters on empathy compared to matched controls (Henriksen, 1991). Although there was not a significant difference between the two groups on helpfulness the peer helpers did positively increase, though there was no change on self-esteem. In terms of qualitative responses, 91% said it helped them understand others better and that the skills they had learnt would be of use throughout their lives, 82% said it helped them know themselves better and 73% said it had made them more confident in decision-making. Peer mediators in the US Mediator Mentors programme showed significantly higher gains on social-cognitive development and empathy measures compared to non-mediators, and reported less conflicted home lives (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003; Lane-Garon et al., 2005). Less positive findings however were reported in the delayed-treatment design study of peer mediation in three US schools; peer mediators showed no gains on conflict resolution skills or on a student attitudinal questionnaire with items relating to school climate (Smith, S. W. et al., 2002).

The skills peer supporters receive are not just limited to the school environment. They are skills that are useful in all domains of life, preparing pupils for adulthood. The conflict resolution and communication skills required by peer mediators have been seen to be valued outside the education system, and to prepare pupils to become good citizens (Baginsky, 2004). For example, peer mediators in the case study by McWilliam (2010) reported that they had increased empathy and communication and mediation skills, with 60.9% feeling that being a mediator would help them in other areas of life and 52.2% that it

would help them when they were older. Whilst the peer supporters showed no measured advances on scales in the US peer mediation study, they did report using peer mediation skills in all life domains; over 87% said they had used their skills with friends and family at least one or two times a month, and over 50% said they used them three or more times a month with classmates (Smith, S. W. et al., 2002).

It is clear that providing support for other pupils is largely a positive experience; peer supporters experience making a difference, perceive social skills benefits and in some studies have had measured advances on aspects of social skills and self-esteem.

Difficulties in implementing peer support

Although the past research evidences that peer support can have benefits for whole school climate, target pupils and peer supporters, it also shows, particularly on bullying, that schemes do not always have the desired impact. In some ways, the adaptability that is the appeal of peer support is also its greatest challenge. There are a range of practical issues a school must consider in developing the most effective system. In the CHIPS schools evaluation, the authors noted that “some schemes fell short of achieving their full potential” because they did not fully address the difficulties they faced (Smith & Watson, 2004, p. 3). Although schools do need to create peer support that suits their particular pupil population, climate and environment, being aware of the common difficulties can inform best practice.

Studies where programmes or a large number of school schemes have been evaluated particularly highlight key practical issues that affect peer support schemes generally. I summarise here the main issues identified in the past literature on peer support, which present a challenge to schools developing and running peer support schemes.

Existing school context

The current climate of a school plays a central role in the design and maintenance of a peer support service. It will also affect the effectiveness of the scheme as it runs. A school wishing to target pre-existing high levels of bullying is likely to need a scheme running in conjunction with other anti-bullying methods, and if pupils feel very unsafe at school it will clearly take longer for the school climate to improve to the extent that pupils feel safe.

In a peer mediation guide for UK schools, Baginsky (2004) particularly notes the importance of the existing school context in terms of how much progress peer mediation can bring about. The author cites evidence that schools with didactic teaching styles, and

authoritarian and punitive discipline are less likely to see much improvement, as will schools where more attention is paid to the desired end result than to the process and values of peer mediation (Stacey & Robinson, 1997 and Tyrrell, 2002, as cited in Baginsky, 2004). It seems that there can be a clash of values in schools where the cooperative values of peer support and the importance of a pupil voice do not already exist.

This is underlined by the evaluation of the CHIPS programme, where peer support was largely successful in the 19 study schools; senior staff all referred to their school having pupil empowerment at the heart of its philosophy (Smith & Watson, 2004). Some further commented that for success to be seen, pupils needed to be used to wielding responsibility at school.

Peer supporter selection and training

Schools can select their peer supporters in a variety of ways: teacher nominations, pupil nominations, a selective application process, pupil volunteers or a combination of some of these. Again, the school context is important as what method works well in one school may not best suit another. In the UK, the MBF views a clear recruitment process as essential for the development of “effective and safe schemes” (MBF, 2011, p. 15). In the CHIPS study secondary schools were more likely to adopt a selective process, with an example being every pupil in a class nominating a girl and a boy (Smith & Watson, 2004). This was seen to have the advantage of minimising jealousy amongst pupils, whereas teacher nominations could select suitable children but lead to less pupils being interested, and asking for volunteers could lead to more interest and more committed peer supporters. The MBF (2011) also suggests that pupil motivation for the role is important, given the amount of time being a supporter involves.

The difference between pupil nominations, and staff nominations can be the difference between a peer support scheme with or without credibility. Peers are likely to choose others they will be happy accepting support from, and the pupils teachers believe will be good role models may not be representative of the spectrum of the full pupil population (Baginsky, 2004; Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Topping (1996) gives the example of the dangers of using “conforming white female middle-class children” (p. 24) in peer supporter roles. Accepting pupil volunteers or nominations has the advantage of empowering pupils to take responsibility, but may also lead to minority groups being under-represented (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Using a selection process has the disadvantage of potentially having negative effects upon pupils who volunteer but are not

chosen; schools need to have strategies in place to support these children (Baginsky, 2004; Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Smith & Watson, 2004). Overall, Cowie and Wallace (2000) recommend that selection processes should: be empowering, open, fair and inclusive, reflect the level of staff involvement intended in the service, and ensure supporters are representative of the school population and that there are sufficient numbers.

The number of pupils selected is certainly important. Schools in England report considerably different numbers of pupils trained. Primary and secondary schools reported having trained between two and 280 pupils, with primary schools usually training a significantly greater proportion of the population (Houlston et al., 2009). For peer mediation, Baginsky (2004) suggests that while larger groups may be more effective this can lead to too many mediators for the level of pupil need. A difference has been seen between US and UK practice; UK primary schools typically train all pupils then select mediators whereas in the US mediators are normally chosen by the school in advance (Tyrrell, 2002, as cited in Baginsky, 2004). Peer mediation generally seems to work well however, if all students in a school are given training in conflict resolution skills even if they do not go on to become mediators (Baginsky, 2004).

Peer supporter age and gender are also factors to consider. Cowie and Wallace (2000) indicate that not all types of peer support are suitable for all ages of children, with mediation, peer tutoring and education, peer counselling and peer mentoring highlighted as unsuitable for primary school aged children (7-9 years). For the common types of peer support older pupils usually support younger ones (e.g. Baginsky, 2004; Houlston et al., 2009), suggesting that schools may not consider pupils' ages as much as how old they are in relation to other pupils. In the qualitative case study of two schools Boulton (2005) found that around half of pupils would prefer to see a peer counsellor that was older than them, while 10% would prefer one of the same age, 2% preferred a younger one and 35% did not mind. Also in this study more than a quarter, 27%, of pupils would prefer to see a peer counsellor of the same gender and a small proportion, 7%, would prefer to see one of the opposite gender.

However, in mixed-sex schools achieving a balance between male and female peer supporters is difficult. In both primary and secondary CHIPS schools female supporters outnumbered male supporters by 3:1, and in the Prince's Trust study a similar ratio was found, with 74% of peer supporters being female (Smith & Watson, 2004; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). In the later survey, English secondary schools were also more likely to report a greater number of girls than boys being peer supporters (Houlston et al., 2009). The difficulty may be that in mixed schools peer support is not perceived as a male role; in

the two all-boys schools in the Prince's Trust study too many boys applied to be peer supporters and in a case study of peer support in an all-boys school there was no difficulty in recruiting supporters (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Another reason may be the gender of the staff co-ordinator creating the perception that peer support is for either girls or boys (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

Once a school has recruited and selected its peer supporters, attention should be paid to the training they are given. It has already been seen that the training and experience of helping others can lead to skill development, but for this to happen the training must be considered carefully. It needs to be relevant to the type of support being offered e.g. peer education and peer counselling, while sharing the need for good communication skills, will require differential training programmes. The MBF (2011) ensured all schools in their more recent pilot had a training system in place, and that all peer supporters could access it. If an outside organisation is providing training it is important that the training is flexible to the needs of the individual school, as appreciated by school staff in the CHIPS programme who said that having someone come in specially to train them made peer supporters feel valued (Smith & Watson, 2004). Training involving experiential learning may be desirable as all children are able to participate in this and can be more enjoyable, though staff should ensure they have control over the situation, support pupils who are emotionally affected by issues raised and positively handle any bullying or conflict that occurs within the peer supporters (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). In their practical guide Cowie and Wallace (2000) offer a variety of possible training methods and suggest that training should be linked to the key qualities desired in a peer supporter, and generally involve core communication skills: giving feedback, attending, listening, responding, questioning and being able to wait for a response in silence.

Staff involvement, awareness and supervision

Training of school staff, as well as peer supporter training, is an important factor. For example the MBF provides training for co-ordinators to be able to run peer support, and included in the CHIPS peer support work with schools was a staff training day. Baginsky (2004) highlights that in a school running peer mediation staff members need to understand the concepts underpinning this and conflict resolution generally.

Although peer support can empower young people to take responsibility, ultimately school staff should manage the scheme and supervise the peer supporters. Typically a member of staff, either a teacher or a pastoral care member of staff, will co-ordinate the peer support system but this on its own is not enough; there must be sufficient support

from management. The MBF (2011) suggest that whilst clear leadership is needed from a staff co-ordinator to maintain peer support, they need the backing of senior management. Smith and Watson (2004) found that support from a member of senior management was crucial, and that this includes not just support in managing the system, but also being allocated sufficient time and resources needed to supervise the peer supporters. Both active involvement of senior management and allocation of sufficient funding were seen to contribute to the success of the peer counselling service studied by Houlston and Smith (2009). Over-reliance on the peer support co-ordinator may also create difficulties if that person leaves the school (Smith & Watson, 2004). For the partnership between the co-ordinator and management to work, senior staff should be consulted and kept informed (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

The role of the scheme co-ordinator(s) is crucial; not only must they manage the system, they must support the peer supporters. This is partly to safeguard the welfare of these pupils. Peer supporters might be confronted with a whole range of other pupils' problems and it is important that they understand which issues they can and cannot handle by themselves (e.g. Baginsky, 2004). The CHIPS programme, for example, provided schools with an example confidentiality policy to be displayed in the designated peer support area, which makes it clear that they will have to report some serious issues to a staff member.

Staff supervision is also needed to safeguard the welfare of other pupils involved in the peer support process. Peer supporters are empowered to support others, and given training to do so, but it is perhaps unrealistic and unfair to expect young people to always get it right. Particularly when peer support is new it is likely that it will take time for peer supporters to adjust to their role, and thus they may not give others the best support possible. The scheme co-ordinator(s) need to monitor how young people are treated. Although pupils are likely to find it easier to relate to other pupils instead of teachers, the power relationship between the peer supporters and those being supported cannot be ignored. Again this emphasises the importance of pupil selection; pupils in need of support will relate to a peer supporter from a popular clique differently from how they would to someone seen as unpopular for example. Co-ordinators need to ensure that pupils are empowered by using peer support.

Interestingly, the role of power relationships between pupils may need to particularly be considered for peer mediation approaches. Mediation systems used in child custody cases in the criminal justice system have been criticised for ignoring the existing power dynamics within the couple. Victims of domestic violence may for example be at a

disadvantage in the mediation process, feeling threatened or unable to change the way they relate to the abusive partner (Grillo, 1991; Johnson, Saccuzzo & Koen, 2005). It seems likely that where pupils are involved in peer mediation at school, one will be more dominant in terms of power. By definition bullying involves an imbalance of power and where other acts of aggression have been involved one pupil may well feel intimidated. The co-ordinator(s) should check that mediation is only used where appropriate and that when it is used both feel pupils feel able to participate fully in the process.

Whilst the role of the co-ordinator(s) is key, all staff should be aware of the peer support scheme and help it to become part of their school's ethos. With peer mediation in particular it is recommended that all school staff should be trained in conflict resolution skills so that they can help embed the scheme into the school culture (Baginsky, 2004). Staff members have the potential to help maintain the momentum of a scheme, by encouraging pupils to use it, identifying children that need support and by supporting the work of the peer supporters. If people such as lunchtime supervisors are not aware of the role of peer supporters, this can cause tension between them and the pupils (Smith & Watson, 2004). Ensuring everyone understands the specific role of the trained pupils can actually be more of a challenge in schools with many strands of pastoral care (Smith & Watson, 2004). It is also important all staff members are aware for practical reasons, as taking students out of lessons for training, sending any necessary letters to parents and displaying information in a school will all require other people's co-operation and help (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Houlston and Smith (2009) reported that regular form group sessions with peer counsellors in their case study school were put in place to enable other pupils to get to know them, but the success of these depended upon the extent to which form teachers encouraged the peer supporters to take charge. Cowie and Wallace (2000) recommend providing all staff members with information about peer support in advance, including how it has been a success elsewhere, and to discuss it fully with everyone.

Funding and resources

It has been seen that the scheme co-ordinator(s) need to have access to the resources needed to run the system and support the pupil helpers. Resources needed may be funding for an outside organisation to provide pupil training, designation of a room or area for peer support, funding or materials to make this area 'pupil-friendly', use of school publicity channels, funding to create publicity such as posters, authority to take pupils out of normal lessons if necessary for training or supervision, and enough time for the co-ordinator(s) themselves to perform their management duties. Access to all of these

depends upon support from the rest of the staff, particularly senior management, and it helps to consider these factors in advance so that you can make others aware of what you will require (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

Funding is particularly important if an outside organisation is required to provide staff and pupil training, and support scheme development. In the UK, the government has previously provided a lot of financial backing for peer support through the funding of major charities, meaning that they could make their services more affordable and accessible to schools. Such external funding is very important, but cannot be taken for granted. Funding for peer support schemes is often connected to its use as an anti-bullying initiative. However, although peer support can tackle bullying to some extent it may not have as great an impact as wished. If expectations in this area are too high and peer support is seen to 'fail', funding may lessen.

The importance of having a designated place for peer support to occur also should not be underestimated. Suitable accommodation, such as a dedicated room, is needed (Baginsky, 2004). This is not always easy for schools to find and can present an issue. For example, Smith and Watson (2004) found that finding space for lunchtime clubs, and quiet areas where vulnerable children could be supported, was a challenge in secondary schools. The MBF (2011) found that schools in their evaluation were using a range of locations such as the school chapel, classrooms that were free, the school library, the canteen or even corridors. They concluded that having a designated place was one of the characteristics of a successful programme, as it gave it a focus and provided a safe area for pupils to go to.

Publicity and pupil awareness

Two issues which are closely related are the level of publicity created and the extent to which pupils are aware support is available to them. Schools have a huge range of methods to publicise their activities: assemblies, form group time, letters sent to parents, notice boards, posters, newsletters, a school newspaper, a website, and more recently, emailing pupils at their school email addresses, plasma screens or their own 'TV channel'. The identity of peer supporters can also be shown by markers like badges, differently coloured ties or hats (e.g. Baginsky, 2004; MBF, 2011; Smith & Watson, 2004). Schools in the CHIPS review often commented that they should have done more to raise awareness of the scheme within the school, and although overall most pupils were aware of their schemes, awareness was lowest in secondary school boys (Smith & Watson, 2004). Ongoing, and high level, publicity is very much tied into the issues identified above; the co-

ordinator(s) need time to arrange this, materials and funding to create it and support from other staff to be able to put out the publicity. Without enough publicity, not enough pupils will know about peer support and thus few pupils will use it. Publicity must happen continuously, not just at the start of a service, or pupil awareness and therefore use will fall-off (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

The MBF found that schools running a drop-in peer support service particularly needed to market it well to pupils (MBF, 2011). Part of the challenge of this was the stigma of going to a place seen as being for victims of bullying. They recommend that having a targeted marketing strategy is seen as an essential component of an effective scheme.

Publicity can also be a way of involving pupils who applied to be a peer supporter but were not successful; having them help market the scheme enables them to be involved in a different way (Baginsky, 2004; Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Responsibility for this could alternatively be given to sub-team within the group of peer supporters, with the advantage that it may help the peer supporters create a group identity (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

Long-term maintenance

Clearly the ability to maintain a peer support service in the long-term will depend upon meeting the above challenges. In addition, it has been identified that long-term success can involve making use of pupils who have been trained in peer support at primary school when they transition to secondary school, and making use of previous peer supporters to help train future pupil helpers (Smith & Watson, 2004). Having a clear purpose for the peer support scheme, and actively evaluating it to manage the scheme more effectively is also seen as essential by the MBF (2011).

Being able to adapt to meet the desired goals of the scheme could also be important for the long-term maintenance of peer support. Within the survey of English schools, those who had been operating peer support for four years and more were significantly more likely to be using multiple types of support (Houlston et al., 2009). Additionally the follow-up study to the Prince's Trust survey found that the peer support systems had evolved, with all but one becoming more flexible (Cowie et al., 2002). Potentially, enabling the service to grow, expand or change direction is important in ensuring its continuation.

Finally having a lot of faith and patience is essential. As it can take a long-time for peer support to become part of a school's culture and to evolve to best meet pupil needs, it can be a long-time before benefits are seen. The staff co-ordinator(s) particularly need to stay motivated and not be discouraged if the scheme is not an immediate success. Cowie

and Wallace (2000) are careful to point out that others will get discouraged, so the co-ordinator needs an endless supply of energy and enthusiasm.

Other factors

Another practical factor that has been reported is ensuring that peer support is as accessible as possible to the pupils it aims to help. For example, a problem identified in an email peer support system was that it could take three weeks for pupils to receive a response, meaning that help was not readily accessible (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Cowie and Wallace (2000) say that pupils at least need to know how and when they can contact a peer supporter, but that schools also need to avoid having a designated place for students to go that is too exposed as it will put some children off going there. Tactics to help ensure accessibility include posting a list of which peer supporters will be available when, so that pupils can access support from the people they feel most comfortable with, and taking the service to the target pupils by offering help at any time and place.

Limitations of previous research

To enable schools to design and maintain successful peer support schemes further research is needed into the relationship between the challenges detailed above and the impact of peer support. Baginsky (2004), in reference to peer mediation, warns that the “difficulty of evaluating areas of life that do not readily lend themselves to being quantified should not be underestimated” (p. 21). This is equally applicable to researching peer support in general, and may explain the wealth of qualitative or subjective data and the comparable paucity of hard, quantitative data.

For a full understanding I argue that more in-depth, longitudinal studies are necessary. In-depth research calls for more than just subjective reports on the success of peer support, which is sometimes all that is provided in case studies. Baginsky (2004) concludes that research on the benefits of peer mediation in the UK is “mostly neither systematically collected nor scientific” (p. 18), with a particular problem being that it is mostly subjective. Ellis et al. (2009) also say that while there is a lot of evidence on peer tutoring “there is a paucity of research on the effectiveness of other forms of peer support, and the research that has been conducted has largely been descriptive and informal” (p. 55). There are a number of rigorous studies of peer support, such as the Prince’s Trust study, other longitudinal studies and case studies with matched controls, but a lot of evidence is also from case studies or evaluations where programmes are studied at only

one time point, before peer support has had time to embed and without quantitative measures.

To provide a comprehensive look at the impact of peer support in schools therefore, a mix of both hard and soft data is required. The sort of qualitative information provided in previous studies is not without great value; peer support is lived by pupils and staff and to capture a sense of that experience open questions, interviews and focus groups must be used. Descriptive information also tells us a lot of information about the running of peer support in that particular school context, which is vital as the nature of peer support will differ from school to school. On the other hand harder quantitative evidence is necessary to reveal the true extent of peer support's impact on specific issues such as bullying levels, perceptions of school climate and the social skills of pupil users and peer supporters.

Mixed-methods approaches therefore offer the best of both. Ellis et al. (2009) advocate the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more holistic account of a phenomenon and to reliably make recommendations based on findings. Peer support has been shown to benefit schools in a range of ways and a comprehensive investigation needs to use all of the means at its disposal to discover the impact of peer support on all of the school domains. Without having an accurate measure of these aspects before peer support begins, it is impossible to reliably say what effect the service has had. Longitudinal studies are therefore needed to track the progress of peer support in a school. It has been seen that peer support can take time to become fully embedded within a school and therefore research needs to look at possible impact in the long-term. Tracking a peer support scheme over time will also allow a look at the role of different practical factors in successful scheme development.

Another limitation in the existing research on peer support is the lack of cross-national studies of peer support use in schools. Given the longer history of peer support in Western countries such as the US, it is not surprising that most research in the field has emerged from the west. However, peer support use seems to be spreading internationally and is now increasingly being used and studied in Japan. More studies should emerge on peer support use in Eastern countries as its use increases, but cross-national research is also needed. The only cross-national work reported thus far is the PEPE anti-bullying intervention in Italy, Spain and England but only findings from the Spanish case studies are available to date (del Barrio et al., 2011; Naylor et al., 2009). Cross-cultural research shows that national cultures can be described in terms of five dimensions which impact upon national life: inequality, individualism, assertiveness, tolerance for ambiguity and

long-term orientation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Peer support use is likely to be influenced by the national dimensions and their relationship with national education systems e.g. studies from Italy and Japan have indicated that particular types of peer support may suit the national context. In particular it has been seen that school bullying behaviour has different national characteristics, particularly between Western and Eastern countries (Morita et al., 1999; Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002; Smith, 2004; Koo et al., 2008). Cross-national research on peer support could illuminate the ways in which peer support should be adapted to have maximum impact in different countries.

Summary and thesis aims

It has been shown that peer support is a method of providing pastoral care that is used internationally and is thought to contribute to the promotion of children's rights, such as safety, health, safeguarding and empowerment. In most countries where peer support is used, there is little information on the extent of peer support use outside individual case studies or information from organisations involved in peer support. However, it is reasonable to say that peer support is used to a large extent in schools in the UK, US, Canada and Australia, and to a lesser but expanding extent in New Zealand, Japan, Italy, Spain and Finland. One reason why peer support may be so popular is that it is a framework rather than a prescriptive method; schools may design peer support schemes to suit their particular context and pupil needs. There are a range of types, with the most common being befriending, mentoring, mediation and peer counselling. However, it seems that different types may be used to different extents in different countries e.g. it has been seen that variations have been developed to better suit the Japanese context.

Peer support clearly has benefits for schools when it is effective. It can improve the whole school environment by positively impacting on school climate, social relationships and bullying issues (largely through supporting victims), and has benefits for both pupils who access and provide the support. Pupil users generally find that the support is helpful and may enjoy improved social skills or relationships, and peer supporters report gaining skills that are useful in all domains of life and in some cases have been shown to make measured advances on aspects of social skills and self-esteem.

Though peer support can yield these benefits, the extent of its impact is limited by the practical difficulties schools encounter in developing and maintaining a service. For example, sufficient support from staff and senior management, having access to funding and resources, creating publicity and ensuring longevity, all present challenges to co-ordinating staff.

Overall the purpose of this thesis is to further explore the use and impact of peer support in schools, with a view to informing good practice. I will do this by building upon the two main limitations I have identified in previous research: the lack of cross-national research and the short-term, qualitative nature of many case studies.

I have identified that although peer support is used in many countries around the world, to varying extents, there is little cross-national work in this area to date. One aim therefore is to compare the use of peer support in different countries, with a particular focus on comparing Western and Eastern countries; greater cultural differences may mean there are greater divergences in the types of peer support used and its impact in schools. To address this I provide qualitative studies of peer support in Japan and South Korea in Chapters Two and Three, and then compare findings with what is known about peer support in the UK in Chapter Four.

The second aim is to build upon previous case study research of peer support in schools. Past studies have often been limited by being short-term in nature or by providing only qualitative data, meaning that the impact of peer support may not yet have been visible and that it is hard to be confident that findings will generalise to peer support practice in general. To contribute to peer support research and to inform good practice in schools, I first present an exploratory investigation of peer support in a UK school in Chapter Five, and a study developing a measure of conflict resolution tactics in adolescents, for use in a case study, in Chapter Six. I then provide two in-depth longitudinal case studies of peer support in UK schools in Chapters Seven and Eight. Both schools developed peer support with a primary general aim of offering additional pastoral support for their younger pupils. Whilst a more secondary aim in both schools was to help with school bullying, and more specific types of potential benefits were recognised by staff, neither scheme was focused on particular outcomes. Rather than test whether specific improvements were achieved, I instead take a comprehensive look at the three main areas of impact identified previously for peer support, benefits for the whole school (including bullying experiences), target pupils and peer supporters, by using a mixed-methods approach. I am also able to identify any practical difficulties experienced by the schools.

Given that this thesis is funded by an ESRC (CASE) studentship with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, which runs ChildLine), as the outside partner, my research in the UK focuses on schools which were involved with the CHIPS peer support programme. Conducting case studies of two schools using the same peer support programme strengthens the comparability of the findings. In Chapter Nine I

compare the findings from the case studies and draw conclusions about the impact of peer support in schools and implications for future practice.

Overall, a general aim of this thesis is to use research to inform good peer support practice in schools. In Chapter Ten I consider the findings of the thesis as a whole, drawing implications for peer support practice, and making suggestions for future research directions.

Chapter Two: An Exploration of Peer Support Use in Japan

Introduction

In this chapter I present a qualitative study investigating peer support use in Japanese schools. During my PhD I won a fellowship from the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), in partnership with the British Council, to investigate peer support in Japan. I spent three months based at Osaka University of Education supervised by Professor Yuichi Toda, with a brief placement at Hiroshima University with Professor Shinji Kurihara. This presented an ideal opportunity to research peer support in an Eastern country, with a view to comparing peer support practice there and in the UK. As identified in the previous chapter, there is a lack of cultural comparisons of peer support use so far.

The extent of peer support practice in Japan has already been summarised in the previous chapter. I will give only a brief summary below of information and findings on peer support use in Japan. The findings from this chapter, and the following chapter on a study of peer support and anti-bullying initiatives in South Korea, are fully discussed in comparison with peer support in the UK in Chapter Four.

Peer support in Japan

Peer support appears to be increasingly popular in Japan. Toda (2005) suggests that Japanese schools began developing peer support in the mid to late 1990s. As described in the previous chapter, there is a national peer support organisation, JPSA, and some unique peer support approaches have been reported. Cowie (2009) implies that there are good foundations for peer support within the Japanese culture. Internationally, peer support is seen as promoting the rights of children and Japan particularly provides children with a safe environment in which to develop. School pupils work in small, supportive groups where help is spontaneously offered and interpersonal norms are conveyed to children by both parents and teachers.

One reason peer support practice is increasing in Japan may be the influence of its success in other countries. Early approaches were influenced by the success of peer support in other countries, but were modified to suit the Japanese culture (Toda, 2005; Toda & Ito, n.d.). The Canadian expert in peer support, Dr Trevor Cole, has also described being invited to train teachers, parents and students in Yokohama, where the first Japanese peer support programme appears to have been developed (Cole, n.d.).

Another potential reason for the development of peer support in Japan is its potential to tackle bullying. Bullying, alongside other deviant behaviour, has been the

cause of a perceived crisis in Japanese society. Cowie (2009) suggests that strong social norms mean Japan as a nation is more likely to perceive children acting in such ways as a very serious concern. Whether there really is a crisis however is in doubt. Gill's (2007, p.451) review of the book 'Juvenile Delinquency in Japan: Reconsidering the "Crisis" ' concludes that: "Statistics, which may or may not be plausible, are used, modified, discredited, or ignored in order to show that there is or is not a crisis in juvenile delinquency in Japan, which may be defined as bullying in schools or as street crime by juveniles."

Whether or not the crisis is real, it certainly appears to be a possible reason peer support has become widely used in Japan. For example, peer support was one strand of anti-bullying work by the Yokohama Teachers Union (Cole, n.d.). Toda (2005) links peer support with bullying in Japan, suggesting that it is useful given the tendency for children not to report bullying and that it can help victims and bullies, as well as positively alter peer group dynamics. In response to the crisis the government has introduced part-time counsellors in junior high schools and changes to the education system, including reduced school hours and greater flexibility for teachers in delivering the curriculum (Cowie, 2009). These changes, as well as cross-curricular education introduced in high schools, may have the effect of providing greater opportunities for teachers to carry out peer support work in schools (Cole, n.d.; Ikemoto, n.d.).

Peer support systems in Japanese schools have however aimed at tackling issues other than bullying. It is not possible to provide a complete review of the literature on peer support in Japan, as I cannot access all Japanese articles, but from the material available to me I can identify some examples of peer support programmes and their aims. As described in the previous chapter, peer support practices have been reported which aim to offer support with school transition, or advice and support for individual student's concerns e.g. the Q&A Handout Method, and other anonymous newsletter and email systems. Peer support systems where all children are trained, but not asked to give support in a formal way, were also described. Ikemoto (n.d.) describes a similar system aimed at creating a positive community, although only volunteer pupils were trained rather than all children.

A number of small-scale peer support studies involving pupil training only have been reported by university students at Fukuyama University in particular. These all involve university students training elementary and/or junior high school pupils in peer support skills, with the aim of improving aspects of children's social and emotional development e.g. self-efficacy, self-esteem and social skills, and some positive effects have been found using self and teacher ratings (e.g. Kotegawa, Okazaki & Matsuda, 2008;

Matsuda & Miyake, 2006). Another reported system where university students work with school pupils, involving activities as well as training, is a mentor system designed to tackle school absenteeism, a serious problem in Japan (Toda & Ito, n.d.).

It is clear that some of the practices reported in Japan qualitatively differ from the approaches usually reported in other countries. Although Japanese practice has drawn largely from approaches elsewhere, peer support has been adapted to suit the Japanese context. Toda (2005, p.309-310) suggests three crucial differences from the British context in particular, with emphasis on tackling bullying:

1) practical difficulties – including lack of time for training and activities due to greater extracurricular demands on pupils, more pupils who are not suited to the role of peer supporter and peer supporters being embarrassed to interact with supported pupils outside of the peer support context

2) school system – unlike UK secondary schools, there are two levels of Japanese secondary school, junior high and high school, each with three school grades which make it difficult to manage peer counselling based systems

3) difference between bullying and *ijime* – compared with bullying in UK schools *ijime* in Japan tends to be less visible due to a negative peer culture, meaning that a peer support system would need to overcome barriers in children seeking support.

Cowie (2009) asserts that within the Japanese context peer support has largely developed along two dimensions in which practitioners are at odds with each other: a counselling model and an educational model. This is actually in line with the two groupings presented by Cowie and Wallace (2000) for peer support generally, those that provide emotional support and those with a more educational/information-giving slant. The difference seems to be the forms that systems in these two broad categories take. The educational approach in Japan seems to refer to the practices where all students in a class, year or school are trained in peer support related skills, rather than using pupils to provide information to others. The counselling model by contrast is used to describe systems which aim to provide support on specific problems to the group or individuals. Cowie (2009) suggests that this divergence into two models may reflect the different states of readiness for peer support in Japanese schools – with counselling approaches only possible in schools at a more advanced stage.

Another way of classifying types of peer support in Japan is a distinction between 'supporter-training' systems, which train select students to support others, and 'community-cultivating' systems, which work with all pupils to promote the skills needed to help each other and create a positive community (Ikemoto, n.d.). The latter are perhaps

the same as the educational model suggested above, whilst supporter training systems would most likely fall into the counselling model as the trained children may well tackle issues via a formal system. A review of 29 peer support systems reported in Japan also found this divide between community approaches and supporter training approaches (Nakao, Toda & Miyamae, 2008). However, this review divided the systems into three categories; whole school approaches, class/grade approaches, and others – each sub-divided into community or supporter training systems.

Overall, peer support in Japanese schools can be described using different categories, with the general trend being that some systems work to promote a positive community and others to target specific issues. The range of approaches is wider than that reported in other countries, and it appears that peer support has been influenced by practice in other countries but also adapted for the particular Japanese context. This chapter will further explore peer support use in Japan, with a view of gaining more in-depth insight.

Aims of this study

The aims of this study were to explore:

- the extent of peer support use in Japan
- the different types of peer support used in Japanese schools
- the features of peer support schemes in Japanese schools
- support for peer support practices nationally

Methodology

Research design

A qualitative study, using interviews with key informants working within peer support.

Participants

Participants were key informants in the area of peer support. Key informants were considered to be people with experience and/or knowledge of peer support use. This included practitioners running peer support in schools or providing training in peer support, and young people involved in peer support systems.

The majority of participants were contacts of my supervisor in Japan, Professor Toda, who had years of experience of supporting peer support practitioners and had links with JPSA and other researchers. Professor Kurihara at Hiroshima University also

arranged some interviews with teachers he had worked with, peer supporters, and a colleague in JPSA.

All together, there were 27 participants, from a range of regions in Japan; Osaka, Nara, Tottori, Okayama, Kochi, and Tokyo prefectures. They included 11 teachers, one principal, six peer supporters, one peer support trainer, three members of JPSA, three researchers/university staff involved in peer support work, one education supervisor and one government researcher. More information on the participants is given in Appendix I.

Instruments

Semi-structured interview schedules were prepared.

- i) Interview Schedule for Teachers – questions about the aims and nature of the school’s peer support scheme, the pupils who acted as peer supporters, their role in the scheme, and any important factors in the running of peer support.
- ii) Interview Schedule for Researchers – questions on their research into peer support, the nature of peer support systems in Japan, national support for peer support practices, and perceptions of future directions of Japanese peer support.
- iii) Interview Schedule for Other Practitioners – questions on membership and the activities of JPSA (if relevant), the nature of peer support systems in Japan, national support for peer support practices, and perceptions of future directions of Japanese peer support.
- iv) Focus Group Schedule for Peer Supporters – questions on their activities as peer supporters, why they decided to be a peer supporter and what it was like, and perceptions of what other pupils and staff thought about it.

Procedure

As described above, participants were contacted by Professor Toda and Professor Kurihara. I liaised with the government researcher myself, but was given the contact details by Professor Toda. Semi-structured interviews were held which typically lasted around one hour and were digitally recorded, with one exception noted in the table of participants in Appendix I. Interviews occurred in the participants’ place of work or a convenient meeting place such as an university office.

For interviews conducted in Hiroshima a masters student working with Professor Kurihara acted as a translator, and for interviews at a JPSA meeting the daughter of the Vice President of JPSA acted as a translator. For other interviews, Professor Toda or an

undergraduate student interested in peer support acted as translator. Three interviews were conducted in English.

There were some practical difficulties in conducting the research. I had to rely upon access to participants through gatekeepers, which meant I often did not have much information about the participants or interview arrangements in advance. I used the interview schedules as guides, but needed to adjust questions as the interviews went along. The need for translators during the majority of interviews created a barrier to getting all of the information I required. It was clear that sometimes not all of the information given in response to a question by a participant was translated, and occasionally the translators struggled to put responses into English or did not know enough about peer support to understand the participants' answers. A further difficulty was the extra time taken for simultaneous translation, which meant I sometimes could not ask questions in as much depth as I would have liked.

However accessing participants through others had benefits. I was able to observe a student summit meeting, a peer support training workshop and a JPSA training meeting, and was able to obtain information on peer support use in a wide range of prefectures in Japan.

Ethical practice

This study was conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Ethical Guidelines. All participants were informed before the interviews commenced that their participation was voluntary, their names would not be published in relation to the research and they could withdraw at any moment. During the two focus groups with peer supporters a member of school staff was present throughout.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed and then the transcripts analysed for content and themes. Descriptive analysis was performed to identify information on examples of peer support practice. Thematic analysis was also conducted to identify overall themes relating to peer support use in Japan. In accordance with the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), this involved: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes to describe interesting aspects of the data, searching for themes amongst the codes, reviewing the themes in relation to the whole data set, creating a diagram to illustrate the themes, and clearly defining and naming the themes.

Findings

Findings from this study are presented in two sections. First the descriptive findings on specific examples of peer support practice are presented, and then the findings of the thematic analysis. Descriptions only of the identified themes are provided in this section; these are discussed at the end of this chapter, as well as in Chapter Four where cross-national findings are discussed.

Where quotations are used to provide information or illustrate themes in the data, they may have been adjusted to be easily understood by the reader. This is necessary for quotations where a translator had interpreted the participant's response, and there were some minor mistakes in the translator's use of English. I do not feel this affects the accuracy of the information, rather it is improving the translation and making the participant's meaning clearer.

The Japanese school system is divided into three school levels with different grades, which the participants sometimes referred to during interviews. Elementary school is divided into grades 1 to 6, with pupils aged 6 to 12, junior high school is formed of grades 1 to 3, with pupils aged 12 to 15, and high school has a further grades 1 to 3, with pupils aged 15 to 18. To make it clear which ages of pupils are being referred to, I have given the typical age of pupils in brackets where a participant refers to a school grade.

Descriptive analysis: Examples of peer support practice

Participants described a range of peer support programmes, with varying features. In some schools a teacher had trained a single class, and other teachers may have followed their example, whereas in other schools a whole grade may have been trained. Other systems involved the whole school and were integrated into school life. Several involved links between schools, usually between an elementary school and a junior high school. Staff and schools cited a variety of aims for their peer support work, often related to improving the school climate, and improving pupils' social relationships.

The types of peer support scheme fell into: Q&A Handout methods, peer mediation, peer tutoring, community approaches/befriending, peer education, and a student summit. The examples of peer support described by participants are summarised in detail in Appendix I, where it can be seen that schemes often involved more than one approach. A fuller description of the general aims, benefits and features of the peer support schemes described by participants is given in the section on the thematic analysis findings.

Thematic analysis findings

A number of themes were identified relating to participants' experience of and attitudes towards peer support use. The seven major themes, with sub-themes, are summarised in Figure 2.1, and descriptions are given below with illustrative quotes.

Major theme 1: Evolution of Japanese peer support

There was a strong sense that peer support practice in Japan had evolved relatively recently and was still evolving. Teachers spoke of developing systems or adapting them from others' practice, and there was a feeling that this type of work was still new and fresh.

One researcher described the development of Japanese peer support as beginning in Yokohama in 1996, following a BBC programme on peer support that was broadcast in Japan. Following this the Japanese School Counselling Association came across peer support practice on a study trip to the US. This motivated the association members to visit Dr Trevor Cole in Canada in 1997 to learn about his peer support programme. In 2003 the Japanese Peer Support Association was founded as a separate association, and the government ministry for education became interested in peer support practice in the following few years.

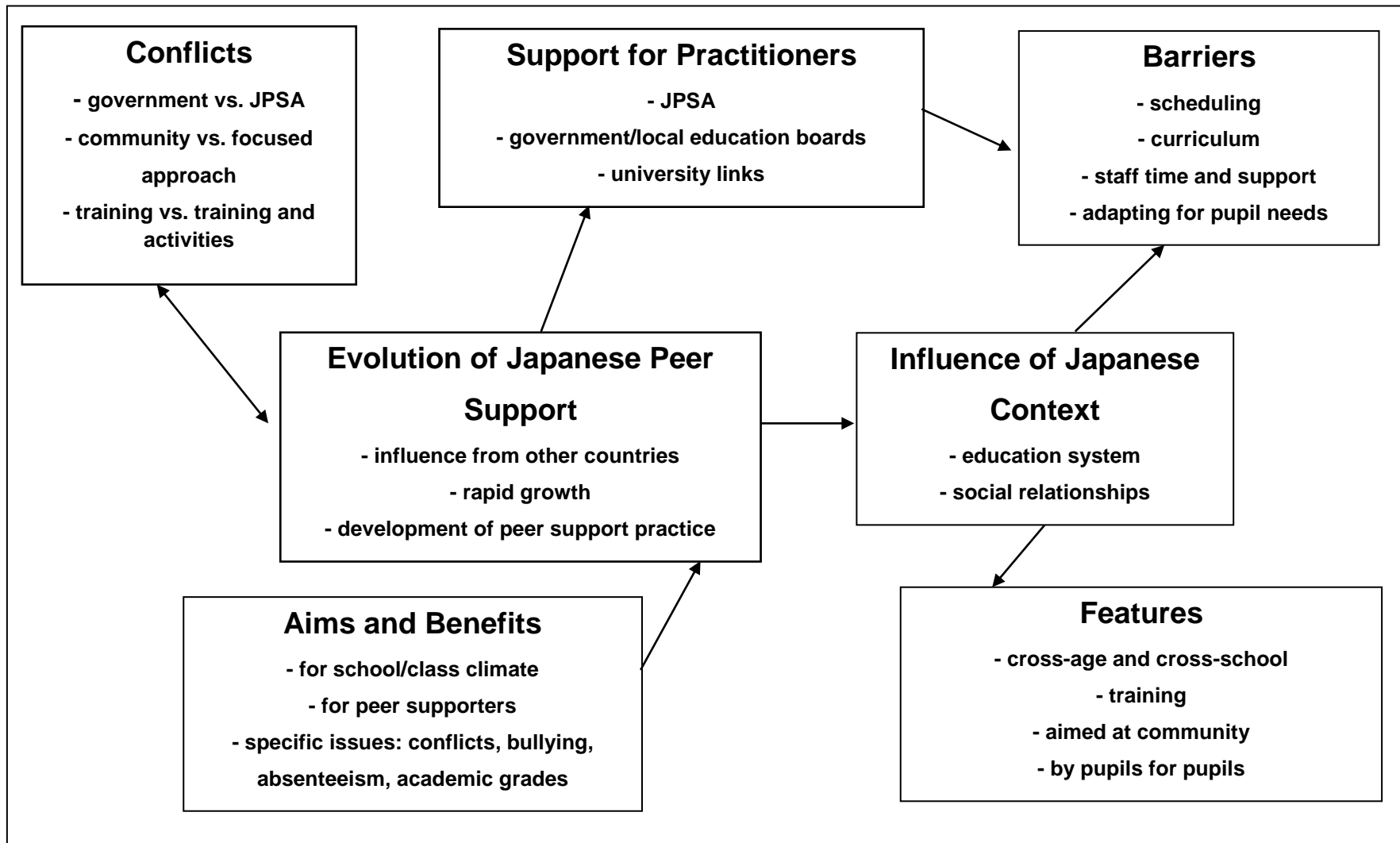
Sub-theme: Influence from other countries

The initiative for peer support in Japan came from observations of practices in other countries, and it was clear that development continued to be largely influenced by work and practitioners from other nations. For example, one principal described how Dr Trevor Cole had trained a school's peer supporters.

[There were] 16 school members. On one or two days I lectured these school leaders. After that we gave the group knowledge of peer support. When these 16 members were in grade 5 [ages 10 to 11] I invited Mr Cole, so they had lectures from Mr Cole directly. – Elementary Principal

JPSA annually runs a study tour where members can go to learn about peer support practices in another country. For example, in the year of my study I had met several JPSA members when they visited the UK for a study programme led by Professor Helen Cowie. These tours typically involve presentations from practitioners or other people involved in peer support, and visits to observe peer support.

Figure 2.1: Major themes and subthemes identified in participants' experiences of peer support in Japan



Essentially, it seems as though Japanese practitioners are learning from what has been done before rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. Unlike in the UK and elsewhere, there is not a range of organisations which can support schools in creating and running peer support. In Japan teachers became interested and JPSA was created with a view to training people to be able to run peer support. There was a sense that the teachers needed to be able to learn and that information from other countries has made this possible.

I learnt about peer support in Canada, UK, US and Australia. In Japan the trainers are normal teachers. The government doesn't give lectures about peer support to teachers. Foreign countries have a lot of books about conflict resolution and peer mediation. In Japan we don't have this. - Researcher

Some interviewees suggested that one reason for this influence was that Japan, unlike other countries, had little history of social and emotional learning in their schools. A professor with expertise in peer mediation had an interest in citizenship education in the UK. A JPSA Senior Member also suggested that teachers in Japan feel there is a need for emotional learning and moral education, and want the ministry to recognise this and peer support as a way of achieving it.

However, teachers were able to fit peer support into the curriculum by using a small amount of time set for moral education.

[They did the peer mediation training] In class time allocated for moral education. In moral education time, they usually find issues to be resolved – sometimes academic, school environment, social relationships. Children notice an issue, discuss it with the teacher, do something about it then evaluate the situation. This is called 'Sogo' learning in Japan. – Elementary Teachers Four and Five

The influence from other countries was not always considered positive. As I describe under a later theme, there was a conflict between the type of peer support run by JPSA and that promoted by the Government Researcher interviewed. The latter felt not enough thought had been given when adopting other countries' practices and adapting them for the Japanese context.

The problem is the definition of peer support. Japan has taken a foreign idea's name without understanding it. Japan takes/welcomes other nations' ideas but doesn't question it ... The Japanese educational tradition is to make older pupils help younger ones, to help the older pupils grow up better. I think such. The object of peer support is to help the older pupils. I say Japanese type of peer support is to target older ones to grow up. In other countries peer support also helps older ones grow up, but the focus is on helping younger pupils. I think the objectives are different. – Government Researcher

The participant expressed the idea that others, notably JPSA, had adopted the Canadian style of peer support but that the Western style did not suit Japan. I will discuss this conflict more fully later.

Sub-theme: Rapid growth

The [peer support] culture, it's popular. Years ago teachers didn't know the word of peer supporter. – Peer Support Trainer

Since peer support emerged in Japan, its popularity has grown. The number of practitioners and extent of the practices across the country have rapidly increased. JPSA membership was reported to be growing every year, with not only teachers joining.

It [JPSA] started with teachers. Some researchers too. Peer support is famous in universities too so some university professors want to join too. There are also some peer support trainers in hospital. It started as a teachers' association but is becoming bigger. Membership increases by 30% every year. - Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

One JPSA Senior Member had been asked to give training to all of the teachers in one city, and I heard that such large training events were happening elsewhere. Although the majority of teachers I met with had developed peer support from their own initiative, it seemed that peer support was becoming adopted by whole cities.

Now in Japan there are so many cities that have started doing peer support, whole cities. - Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

It appeared that local education boards were gradually promoting peer support to the teachers in their area, working with JPSA. One interviewee suggested that in the last five years or so the government had become interested in peer support, helping to influence the rapid growth of activities.

Now it is in the handbook, the national education handbook for school counselling. The last handbook was five years ago. So this will be a very huge departure from the previous situation. Peer support is now being used very widely. - Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

One teacher noted that a session on peer support was now included in teacher training by their local education board. Some teachers also said they had been asked by the government or local education board to develop a peer support system. For example, an Elementary School Principal had been asked to develop peer tutoring, although the government had only been interested in the academic results not the whole system.

The government cultural department told him to bring this system to develop the students' studying. So the school was developing peer supporting for the students to get good scores ... Of course he reported to the ministry but maybe the ministry people also [as well as other teachers] didn't understand the system. However, the school's grades were all up so the ministry was happy with the results. - Elementary Principal

The Government Researcher reported that one reason the government had become interested in peer support was as an anti-bullying initiative – following media focus upon bullying in Japan a ministry had asked him what could help and he suggested peer support.

There also appeared to be media interest in peer support work. One JPSA Senior Member showed me TV clips about peer support, and two interviewees said that local media had reported on their work. For example, TV crews and a newspaper had visited the technical high school on the days anti-bullying peer education had been delivered.

Sub-theme: Development of peer support practice

Because the task in Japan is, we already improved the training model but in this way of thinking the activity is kind of low-level. We don't have much idea. Because of the low-level of history we still improve. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

There was a feeling that the groundwork has been laid; Japanese practitioners have now learnt what peer support is and how to train others in this work. However, attention now needs to move on to other areas. The above quote illustrates the perception that JPSA has focused upon developing training models for peer support and attention should now move to improving the actual activities.

Another area identified was the need to improve the skills of the people running peer support in schools. Although JPSA runs training courses, there were some questions over whether teachers and other practitioners had the skills needed.

Now I'm interested in, yes we know what is peer support and we have many patterns of programmes, but we have to say about the skills of the facilitators. If we have teacher A and B giving the programme it is not the same. I'm always thinking, I have been facilitating for a long time but it is not perfect. I have to learn every time.– Senior JPSA Member Two

The above interviewee conveyed the notion that there had been a rapid learning curve alongside carrying out early practices, and that time was needed to reflect on what had been learnt.

Yes, at first we didn't know what peer support is. We had to learn but couldn't do peer support. We needed to be in high schools. I had to go to Tokyo to study. So we were learning but there was no time to put it into practice.– Senior JPSA Member Two

Major theme 2: Conflicts

Within the evolution of peer support, a few conflicts between the types of practices being used had emerged. A range of approaches were being used, but different participants supported different methods or felt some were less suitable for the Japanese context.

Sub-theme: Government vs. JPSA

The clearest conflict was between the model and approach used by JPSA and the approach favoured by the Government Researcher. The government researcher suggested that two types of peer support had developed in Japan.

Others import peer counselling from Canada but... the method [I favour] has become a little bit famous so people use this too. So there is some confusion ... I think there are two

types of peer support in Japan: One) Japanese type peer support and Two) Canadian style peer counselling. – Government Researcher

The Government Researcher referred to the government approach as the 'Japanese type'. The participant emphasised the importance of training older children to act as peer supporters in the Japanese type of peer support. The central aim was to encourage cross-age activities as these activities do not happen naturally anymore – families may have only one child, and children are less likely to play with other children.

Tactics for asocial children are cross-age activities which lead to social self-efficacy. Younger children get role models and older ones get to see how society is. This turns into confidence in themselves as a member of the group. – Government Researcher

The participant contrasted this approach with typical practice in Western countries, where children who become peer supporters already have self-efficacy. A crucial difference appeared to be the aim – to benefit the children providing peer support or the children being supported.

This Government Researcher perceived a main difference between the government's Japanese type approach and the peer support approach favoured by JPSA. This participant felt that in the 'Japanese type' the emphasis was on benefiting the children being supported, but that in the JPSA model the emphasis was more equal between benefiting the pupils acting as peer supporters as well as the pupils receiving support. The Government Researcher considered this latter approach to be more akin to the peer support practised in Western countries.

This difference between the Japanese type and the approach used by JPSA was echoed by the JPSA members interviewed. As indicated below, the JPSA approach saw peer support as benefiting the peer supporters but also able to solve problems faced by other students.

I think the big difference between [the government] model and JPSA's model is that, as you know, [the government] model focuses on training, so this focuses on peer supporters' skills. JPSA on the other hand, they are also thinking of improving the peer supporters' skills, but that's because they are focusing on their feeling of 'I want to help someone'... To solve the problem such as bullying or transition to junior high or high school. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

However, for JPSA members the main difference between the two approaches was that the government approach focused upon training, whereas JPSA placed equal importance on the actual activities. The criticism made in the following quote from the Researcher/Senior JPSA Member is that the Japanese type only required some pupils to be trained and didn't actually require any peer support to be provided.

The JPSA model is: training, planning, activities, and supervision. [The government] model is: activities first. [They] claimed this is the model – that these two are important, but actually it only involves training with no activities.- Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

Interestingly this difference was not supported by the interview with the Government Researcher. Rather, this participant also advocated activities as the crucial element and placed little value on training.

At first we need training, but now we don't emphasise the training. Just one or two hours playing together. I told you Japanese children don't like playing together so [we need to] show them playing together is fun as well as TV games. It is warming up not training. If teachers have no time to have warm-up it is okay. But you should give up preparing time for the ceremony. Just training is not so important. In my research, after training children do not change. This means only training cannot change children. – Government Researcher

Therefore, whilst the government approach and the JPSA approach did differ, the differences in perspective may not have been as great as perceived by the participants.

Sub-theme: Training vs. training and activities

The issue of peer support training versus activities was another conflict present. It came across that a lot of initial peer support work had only involved training and no activities, or only a very small amount of activities. For example, one of the JPSA Senior Members described initially running peer support training only, but in the second year being able to do activities as well, which had greater benefits.

Yes, the first was only training. The second one did planning and support activities. This was very good for the students as they see they have done small support and others

accept the support. It gives them very good confidence and self-esteem. – Senior JPSA Member Two

This interviewee planned to compare a scheme where only training was given and one where activities were included. Another participant had similarly only done training in the first year of practice, and in the second included activities. This teacher had also seen a difference when doing research as part of an educational masters.

In the first year I did training only, in the second year training plus activities. And because of my masters course I needed to do research. I contacted one control group and one experimental group. One had training only all the time, and the other one had training plus activity. And I evaluated the relationship pre and post [the programme]. The training was at the same time, but after one had finished the training, the other did the activity. I saw the difference. – Elementary Teacher Two

The feeling that came across was that practitioners initially were only able to deliver pupil training due to either time or skills constraints, but it was now becoming recognised that activities were an important part of peer support.

Sub-theme: Community vs. focused approach

Closely related was a distinction between peer support practices where a group of pupils were trained as peer supporters with a focused approach, and practices where all pupils were trained with the idea that the peer support skills would be used in daily life.

I think there are two types of peer support. The current one is the community-cultivating type. There is: One) Supporter Training type: like peer counselling, where you train peer supporters to support other students, and Two) Community type: where peer supporters offer more natural support, they give support in daily life. – Senior JPSA Member Two

An example of the community type of peer support was the peer mediation work developed by a junior high school teacher and several elementary school teachers.

She doesn't call it training, she just wanted them to know about Peer Mediation. She thinks that if the students know how to mediate it's useful for them. The idea was that they will then use mediation in everyday life, not in formal activities. – Junior High Teacher Three

Major theme 3: Support for practitioners

As has been seen, peer support was often set up in a school by an individual teacher working with their own class. It was clear that these teachers valued any support they could access to help them in their work. Support for peer support schemes came from three main sources according to participants: from JPSA, from staff at universities, and from the government or local education board.

Sub-theme: JPSA

JPSA runs regular training courses where people can achieve a licence to practice peer support, runs other training seminars or events, and provides information for members.

The organisation is funded by its membership fees, and does not receive any outside funding. Membership is for individuals rather than organisations like schools, and it seemed as though members typically paid with their own money.

I: And for teachers, do the schools pay the memberships?

S: Usually in Japan that's not going to happen. In Japan the schools and the government and these associations are separate. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

Participants reported a range of benefits they received from being a JPSA member. As well as receiving training and useful information, membership of JPSA provided peer support for practitioners.

There is a regional meeting of elementary and junior high school teachers to compare training and make planning. By sharing experiences it gives motivation. – Junior High Teacher Two

Maintaining motivation was a clear benefit of meeting other practitioners at JPSA meetings. Running peer support on their own could be difficult for teachers, making this contact with others very valuable.

I get new information, new training. I get excited about if I can try this. I feel not lonely in the practice. When I see friends working hard, I know other people are doing this too. Maybe I get motivated if I see them doing hard work, I do it harder myself. – Elementary Teacher Two

Sub-theme: University links

There were strong links between school practitioners, and staff and students at universities. These links with universities took the form of help with training, having been educated in peer support at university, practical support in running peer support, or supervision in developing the service.

Teachers often studied masters courses in education at university, and participants often reported learning about and/or researching peer support during their masters. Peer support practitioners and JPSA Senior Members seemed to often be graduates or professors from universities.

For example, a teacher who developed peer mediation with her class reported having learnt about peer support during a seminar at a university. This teacher was part of a group running peer mediation, whose work had been supported by another interviewee – a researcher at that university who specialised in peer mediation. This researcher had helped the teachers produce training videos for their classes, even appearing in them.

University students interested in peer support were reported to also offer practical support. One participant described how the school's Q&A Handout system had been improved by a psychology graduate student.

In the first year, at first, children answered [the problems written by other pupils] by just reading the concern paper, but this changed after the coming of a psychologist who supported the practice. He was my friend and he wanted to stay in a university as a graduate student. At that time he was supporting the practice. He invented a kind of worksheet. Write the concerns here and use prompts to think deeply about the problems and how to say something about them ... prompts to get them to be empathetic, to think deeply. – Elementary Teacher One

Other systems had also been helped by university students. For example, university students had edited the anti-bullying video produced by a student summit and a student who wanted to be a broadcaster had given peer educators at another school training in how to speak with the media.

It appeared to be common for a university professor to supervise the development of peer support schemes by school staff. The professor who supervised my research in Japan had worked with several teachers I interviewed, providing guidance and

suggestions in their peer support work. The Researcher/JPSA Senior Member had also supported several teachers and masters students in their peer support practice.

One strong example of this kind of supervision was between a university professor (who translated during some interviews) and the Education Supervisor interviewed. This participant had created both the student summit and a Q&A Handout system in a school when working there as a teacher. In this junior high school a lot of pupils had been traumatised by the murder of one of their elementary school teachers by a former pupil. The students were very violent and anti-social to begin with and staff had worked on a gradual programme to improve the school climate. Throughout the period the interviewee and professor met frequently.

S: Eight months, I talked to [the professor] for every month.

Professor: Not every month, every two months. Sometimes we meet near a station we use and talk into the night, planning what to do next.- Education Supervisor

This kind of relationship appeared very beneficial, with the emphasis being on using the university professor's experience to make suggestions, but allowing the teacher to make the decisions.

S: Very, very good supervisor of me.

Professor: But sometimes it's your choice. I'm letting you know the options only. Same structure, I'm showing you options, many options, options you select. And you show the students options.- Education Supervisor

Having such a supervisor was identified as a key issue in setting up peer support.

There have been no problems with the kids but if starting peer support you should care about two issues:

- 1) Need a supervisor – I was lucky, if I needed advice I could ask [professor].*
- 2) Relationship/understanding with teachers. If you don't have support you can't continue so getting this is very important to develop. – Elementary Teacher Two*

This links in with the earlier notion that teachers in Japan may not yet have the skills necessary to run peer support; until the skills are established such supervision appears useful.

Sub-theme: Government/local education board

Some financial support was available for schools to carry out peer support from the government. The Government Researcher described this fund as being for any type of peer support service, but only mentioned the cross-age 'Japanese type' this interviewee favoured and the Group Encounter approach (described in Appendix I) in connection with the fund. In contrast to the increasing extent of peer support practice across the country the Government Researcher described only a small number of schools receiving this funding.

This interviewee expressed the opinion that there was insufficient evaluation of the peer support work that the government funded in this way, and that schools may not really be running peer support as the participant would define it.

S: But the [government] fund says 'peer support' not 'Japanese peer support' so schools can apply for any kind of peer support. The easiest way is five hours training, no activities – such schools have not good results.

I: Does the ministry ask for evidence of the success of peer support when it has funded a school?

S: Yes but not really. It is a report so teachers can say 'pupils improved'.

I: Just a teacher report?

S: Yes, it is a pity. – Government Researcher

As described under the major theme on the evolution of peer support, some teachers reported being asked to create peer support by the government or local education office. Funding seems to have been available in these cases, but similarly the outcomes were not extensively examined. For example, as quoted earlier the principal who had been asked to develop peer tutoring to improve academic scores suggested that the ministry had not been particularly interested in the programme.

It appeared government work supporting and promoting peer support had developed separately from the work of JPSA. However, some JPSA members, including the above participant, had been asked by the government or local education boards to deliver lectures to teachers in areas or cities, and peer support was now included in some teacher training and a national handbook. The group of teachers I met who had created peer mediation in their schools reported that work had been recognised by the city

education board, also giving the impression that peer support was recognised as something of value by education boards.

Overall, it seemed that perhaps the government was beginning to work with JPSSA, or at least alongside the association, to promote peer support practice in Japan.

Major theme 4: Influence of Japanese context

Although peer support in Japan has been greatly influenced by practice in other countries, it was clear that in some ways it had been adapted to suit the particular national context. There were two main aspects of the Japanese context that affected practice: the education system and the nature of social relationships.

Sub-theme: Education system

Some features of the education system were seen as causing difficulties for peer support practice. Teachers were required to change schools periodically, meaning that it was difficult for a system to be maintained. Given that peer support would normally have been created by a particular teacher, it may well stop when they leave the school unless they had given other staff a lot of training.

The curriculum was perceived to restrict the potential for peer support. As described earlier, participants felt there was a lack of social and emotional learning within the curriculum. Peer support training was sometimes delivered during moral education, but there were few hours set aside for this. It was difficult to fit peer support elsewhere in the timetable, meaning it often had to be conducted outside of normal school hours.

If we do the practice only in school hours, I know in Japan the class curriculum is strictly limited. And many teachers try to teach in that strict time so they can't have a lot of extra time but I think a peer support system must take a lot of time. – University Staff Member

The Principal who had created peer tutoring for mathematics also felt this programme would be difficult to sustain as the curriculum would keep changing.

However, peer support was seen as having the potential to tackle school refusal, a serious problem faced by schools in Japan. It was not uncommon for students to refuse to go to school and remain absent for a long time.

There are students who were absent from school. When they come back they feel anxious, afraid and other students look at them. The peer supporters say hello, good

morning, with a tender word to help the student relax. It is small support but very important. – Senior JPSA Member Two

Another approach was to use cross-school peer support to help children feel less anxious about the move to the next school, and thus less likely to stop going to school.

Another way in which the education system affected Japanese peer support was related to the below sub-theme of social relationships. It was perceived by the professor I worked with and one participant he had supported, that it was necessary for school staff to avoid derogation by more senior staff. They expressed the sense that in Japan more junior people are not taken as seriously as others, and so might have difficulties creating new practices like peer support.

S: So [the professor] is a very, very good choice. He became the friend of my boss, the top boss.

Professor: Yes, before that I asked him to do the practice together with the middle person and let him have the result so as to avoid his bullying or derogation. And the next step is to talk to the top boss and to make a good atmosphere for the next practice. That kind of support is very necessary in Japanese society. – Education Supervisor

Sub-theme: Social relationships

Several participants suggested that Japanese people had difficulties communicating face to face with others.

I think people in Japan are not good at direct communication. Not good at helping others. – Government Researcher

Some felt that this was a recent cultural problem; in the past children communicated with others to a much greater extent but now needed to learn how to do this.

In the past time people have a lot of help from others, now the students don't have helping with others. They don't have relationships with others so they probably need that kind of training. – Peer Support Trainer

A few interviewees suggested that Japanese people had not had to learn how to communicate with others to the same extent as people in other nations because Japan is far less multi-cultural.

We have one nation, only Japanese people live in Japan. In your country you have many nations so you have to learn how to communicate with others. In Japan we don't so we don't have to learn this. - Researcher

Difficulties with communication skills meant that peer support practices were seen as needing to be adapted. For example, the professor specialising in peer mediation felt the model from Canada needed to be slightly altered.

The ALS formula from Canada is: Agree, Listen, Solve. Under Agree in Japan we have taken out – 'You do not name call or make faces', as this is very difficult. Also don't have, 'If we can't solve it I'll ask an adult for help.' - Researcher

Peer counselling was often said to be inappropriate in Japan because of the difficulties people have in admitting they have a problem. One consequence of this was the popularity of anonymous forms of peer support, such as Q&A Handout approaches.

There is actually some activity which is anonymous. Especially for the Japanese culture, we don't have much counselling so we are unable to say we have a problem. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

Peer counselling was even considered dangerous by some who felt that if the pupils were not trained properly serious problems would result.

I don't recommend the counselling type in Japan. If we hear counselling then we think it is very serious and have to do the training many times. I think the community type is more suited to Japanese schools. – Senior JPSA Member Two

By contrast, the Q&A Handout system was seen as particularly appropriate for Japanese schools because it was common for teachers to make newsletters to give to pupils.

Q&A Handout I think is a very good practice because elementary schools and junior high schools have a print-paper culture. The teacher says if he thinks the students are good or not, he gives everyone some advice. She or he writes such words on the paper. It's a culture of Japanese schools. – University Staff Member

It was also seen as enabling students to access support despite being too shy to communicate with others.

Some of the Japanese are too shy to consult others. For some people it's very fitting to [use the Q&A Handout system] I suppose. Consulting face to face would be better but some are not able to do that. So that's why the paper way would be preferable for the culture. And also some children don't have energy to come to some teacher or adult who will help them. – Elementary Teacher One

One aspect of the nature of social relationships which was perceived to have an effect was the nature of bullying. As discussed in Chapter One bullying, *ijime*, in Japan predominantly takes the form of social exclusion. In Japan bullying occurs amongst children of the same age, unlike in Western countries where older children typically bully younger ones, and one interviewee identified that in Japan children become less likely to intervene in bullying as they grow older.

In Japan the number of bystanders are increasing steadily between elementary and junior high school. In the UK and Holland the number of bystanders increases up to junior high school age then decreases. – Researcher

The Government Researcher linked the difference in the nature of bullying to the trend for Japanese children to spend a lot of time on their own – to be asocial rather than anti-social. The participant felt this meant that a particular type of peer support was needed to counteract this behaviour.

I have visited many schools in Europe and in boys especially see a lot of aggression. Bullying is mostly hitting and kicking. In Japan even boys don't bully like this, mostly isolation and exclusion. Not anti-social behaviour, being asocial – don't want to interact with others, just watch manga etc..- Government Researcher

The Government Researcher identified that unlike in other countries the problem could not be tackled using legislation, and that in Japan peer support, where older children supported younger ones, was needed to promote social self-efficacy.

I noticed in UK physical bullying is so serious, but in Japan it is more exclusion. So in Japan no legal way to stop it. In Europe can have a register or punishment if use violence. Cannot do this in Japan, cannot be punished by law. We need to change their mind, their moral on the face of asocial behaviours. Want to change their asocial situations. - Government Researcher

Major theme 5: Barriers

A number of barriers in running peer support were identified by participants. These were largely related to the education system and difficulties in scheduling peer support activities, but included the need to adjust the system for different pupils' needs.

Sub-theme: Scheduling

Several interviewees said the biggest problem in running peer support was scheduling the activities. As has been identified, the Japanese school curriculum did not include much time for social and emotional learning, and thus there was little opportunity to fit peer support into class time. Since peer support could often not be run in class time, particularly if it involved students from more than one class, it often ran outside school hours. This meant it clashed with other extracurricular activities.

The biggest issue is how to adjust the time – club activities and peer tutoring. Most pupils attend clubs and if it is a sports club it is hard to take the time. It is hard for students to do both. Here in Japan club activities go first. If there are competitions these are important for club ethos. Sometimes the high school students push the junior high students to put this [the clubs] first. Some teachers think in the same way. So this can make it difficult to run peer tutoring effectively. Usually students who are good at club activities want to do peer tutoring. – High School Teacher One

As seen in the above quote, students had to try to fit in peer support with studying and school clubs, upon which a great emphasis was typically placed by schools. Interviewees also commented that the students who chose to become involved in peer

support were typically those who were active in other school activities. This could lead to difficulties in retaining peer supporters and having as effective a programme as desired.

The change is not big as there are not many peer supporters. At first 35 students came but not all could continue as 90 minutes is too long and many are too busy. In high school can't do peer support in the curriculum. It is a very big problem I think. At the end there were almost half left. – Senior JPSA Member Two

One way of overcoming this was to establish peer support as part of the school system, as in the long-running peer tutoring programme detailed in Appendix I, or establishing it as a club activity on a par with others.

I explained personally to the Head Teacher and Vice Head Teacher, and the teachers in charge of other sections – our students will be leaders of our society in the near future so they need to learn more than their subjects. More about human relations or communication skills, because they are going to be leaders. Of course they agreed with my opinion, but said we have much to do. First the students have to study. It is hard to do both of them. But I think peer support is a club activity so they must be allowed. I explained this to the other teachers. – Senior JPSA Member Two

Another approach used in one school was to ensure that the teachers bore most of the workload. In this school using, a Q&A Handout system, the teachers provided a lot of practical assistance to ensure the peer supporters only had to use a small amount of time to answer other students' concerns.

Usually me but many people help me. Cutting paper and gathering [the answers] is the work for teachers. Usually it is the work for teachers. Students' work is only thinking and writing words for posters. Usually the ideas coming in the front are the job of students but the jobs behind this are for the teachers. – Education Supervisor

Sub-theme: Support from other staff

Linked with the above barrier was that of needing to have support from other school staff, if peer support was to be successful. Teachers reported that it was difficult to convince other school staff that peer support was worthwhile, particularly older members of staff.

I didn't tell other colleagues I was doing this. After we were given the prize we were famous and our colleagues wanted to do peer mediation with us – so our colleagues knew after this. A few teachers now want to do peer mediation too but some don't think it will be good for the children in real situations. Older teachers don't want to do peer mediation. – Elementary Teacher Five

In one instance for example, it was thought that bringing children together at a student summit could be dangerous.

First, some teachers say let's go but some teachers no, no, no ... Later, one teacher said if many teachers make students gather there will be some incident. Traffic incident or punching together, fighting or so on. – Education Supervisor

This participant had been able to convince enough of the other teachers involved, but was aware of having taken a lot of responsibility on individually.

Interviewees often described a process whereby other members of staff gradually came to understand peer support and recognise its value. In one school this had been helped by putting the power in teachers' hands to develop the peer support system in their class.

First year I also didn't know how to do it, so first I said this is something you are supposed to do, to the teachers. So every teacher refused. In the second year I arranged how to do it - you can arrange it yourself, not be forced. So we arranged some workshop for the teachers, so they could understand gradually. So the teachers themselves understood, and enjoyed it. Gradually they understood. Also, between teachers their communication skills went up. – JPSA Member

The lack of support could also mean a lack of practical support from the school. Participants typically paid JPSA membership or training themselves, but may also have had to use their own money to run their peer support practice.

In the last school it was very open, you can choose to go to JPSA meetings. In this school it has been difficult but now some teachers are understanding. The membership fee and course fees I pay myself but travel and accommodation are paid by the school. This school is better at supporting with money if I want to learn something.- Junior High Teacher Two

As illustrated in the above quote however, the situation varied from school to school.

Sub-theme: Staff time and skills

Teachers running peer support did so in addition to their normal work, often using a large amount of their personal time. Any training they attended, for example training from JPSA, was typically done in their own time and there could be difficulties in fitting this with the school schedule. Teachers had to manage their time so that time available with pupils was used to its best advantage.

It was hard sometimes to be together with students. I planned what I will have to do in the future. If I have to spend time with students I have to plan something in advance. So that's why it was hard to do, time management was hard. – Technical High School Teacher

This contributed to the perceived lack of skills amongst teachers running peer support. The Senior JPSA Members interviewed identified that teachers would need greater skills to be able to do certain types of peer support – but teachers were lacking the time to attend training or otherwise develop their skills.

In Japan we have work like befriending, not trying to help victims. One of the reasons they do befriending kind of systems is because of teacher training. They don't have much skills so they can do this [befriending]. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

Sub-theme: Adjusting for pupil needs

There was the sense that peer support needed to be run differently depending upon the needs of pupils, which could particularly differ with the school level.

I think elementary school children are different from older children. Junior high school children are shy so it's difficult to do training for all of them [together]. – Peer Support Trainer

Different participants expressed particular difficulties with running peer support at different school levels. Some felt that peer support was harder to do in elementary schools

due to the age of the pupils. However, others felt it was easier at this school level because pupils faced less academic pressure.

The junior high school teacher thinks the peer mediation class is better for elementary school students than junior high school students, because in junior high school they have entrance exams to get into high school. However, one of the elementary school teachers tried to do peer mediation with a 2nd grade class [ages 7 to 8] but it was really hard.- Elementary Teacher Four

At high school level, exams were also a difficulty. For example, a peer tutoring system, where high school children tutored junior high students, had the problem that tutors in the highest grade could not work in their final term because of exams.

The types of children in a class or school also required consideration. Shy children were seen as needing extra support from teachers, and encouragement to participate, but could benefit the most from peer support training.

I realised that because of shy kids it is important to match the training and the kids you are working with. Compared to high school students, elementary school students feel strongly if they are pushed. I had to arrange the situation for them to do support. – Elementary Teacher Two

Recognising children's anxieties and adjusting the system could make it easier, as for the peer supporter below.

At first I was anxious a little bit. It will be the same for the junior high students. So the first session was self-introductions and small questions only – daily talks. – High School Peer Supporter Three

The above peer supporter was involved in a peer tutoring scheme, where teachers arranged for peer tutors to work in pairs with two or three younger children.

If the junior high students come by themselves they'd be very alone and feel oppressed by their seniors. It's the same for the high school students – they would feel anxious or not confident responding to the junior high students. In pairs it is easier and more desirable. – High School Teacher One

In the school using the Q&A Handout system, where the children had been traumatised by the murder of their previous teacher, it was felt necessary to improve the school climate overall before peer support would be possible.

At first much violence was in the school, and we cannot do the peer support. First we tried to make the school more quiet, more calm. – Education Supervisor

Developing an effective system was considered to take time. For example, the teacher involved in a Q&A Handout method said it had taken time for a fairly constant level of use to be achieved.

At the beginning there were not so many [concern papers], it kept growing and growing. At first one or two, and afterwards three or four per month. - Elementary Teacher One

Interviewees had often surveyed pupils in their class before beginning peer support, to find out what problems they experienced or how they might feel about the idea of peer support. Overall, peer support was described as an ongoing process, where practice was adjusted to meet pupils' needs.

Major theme 6: Aims and benefits

A range of reasons were reported for peer support in Japanese schools, with overlap as some systems had several aims. Benefits related to these aims were also perceived by participants.

Sub-theme: For school/class climate

It was common for peer support to aim to foster a good climate within a school or class. One type of peer support with this focus was the 'community method', where students were given training in peer support and encouraged to use these skills in daily life.

Such very small support. The peer supporters have learnt how to listen so they want to listen to others – not so serious problems, like love affairs. They can use their skills. They want to listen in daily conversations, not special counselling. – Senior JPSA Member Two

The idea was that pupils would learn how to communicate better with each other and thus a better atmosphere would develop. Participants had found that children involved in such peer support enjoyed it and gained from it. One teacher gave three examples of small changes he had observed in his class' behaviour.

One) When they see a kid who looks down they say good morning, the person responds and the children think about how their response is and if they're okay. Two) If they see someone with an injury they offer to help with stairs, hold their luggage. Three) When they see lonely kids they say, 'Let's go together'. – Junior High Teacher Two

The students themselves perceived an improvement in their class.

I didn't know why we did it but little by little I think the class atmosphere has improved and we trust each other more. – Junior High Peer Supporter Three

Other practices involved training all children in a class and then helping the students think of activities they could do informally. For example, one teacher had begun by doing training only in the first year, but in the second year suggested ways that the students could help younger students and found that all really enjoyed it.

The kids say they really loved it, they liked playing with their elders. They want them to come every day and call them like big brothers and sisters. Even outside the support sessions they played together. I asked other teachers to let the older and younger children play together. As a result conflicts between kids decreased so other teachers loved it too. - Elementary Teacher Two

School climate could also be improved because of the knock-on benefits for staff. By enabling children to resolve their own problems or decrease conflicts, staff spent less time dealing with such issues. In the below quote the interviewee describes being happy to give so much time to peer support because it meant less time was being spent on negative issues.

Everyday I go back to home about 10 or 11 [pm]. I come to school about 7, 6 or 7 [am].

...

That kind of time I use, I'm so happy. When we don't do peer support, using time for students I have to go to police and family court. – Education Supervisor

However, it was recognised by a couple of participants that peer support on its own was not enough to change a school's environment.

I also think the school doesn't change only by peer support. To change the school peer support is one thing to use but I think you need the others. Like it's the same as a good soup, you can't make such a good soup with just one ingredient. – Researcher/Senior JPSA Member

Sub-theme: For peer supporters

Benefits in terms of skills gained and positive experiences were reported for children acting as peer supporters. For the Government Researcher the main aim of Japanese peer support should be to foster social skills in older children.

In Japan the object of... Japanese style peer support is for older pupils to get 'social self-efficacy' – not just self-efficacy, getting respect from others. – Government Researcher

Teachers running a peer tutoring programme with high school students helping junior high students, described the main aim of the system as giving the older students a positive experience. However, the younger pupils seemed to benefit as well.

We don't so much expect an academic effect. We do remedial teaching for students who have difficulties in learning. Mainly the effect is not for junior high students but for high school students. It gives them a chance to notice the effects of teaching someone and the difficulties of doing this. But some junior high students are thankful for learning the way to study effectively. - High School Teacher One

The peer tutors also expressed the feeling that both they and the students they tutored had benefited.

I feel happy with the happy face of the junior high students when they solve the problem I have prepared. – Peer Supporter 3

For other participants, benefits for peer supporters may not have been the main aim but were also seen.

After the three years experience [of peer support training] many students change in their mind, because they talk to each other and some people are proud of them. At first the person doesn't like himself but communication, by communication, many people like themselves. – JPSA member

Sub-theme: Specific issues

Some peer support was aimed at tackling specific issues in schools, such as conflicts amongst pupils, bullying, transition to a new school, absenteeism and improving grades. One participant said that the information on peer support in the new national handbook for school counselling was aimed at using it for school bullying and transition issues.

Peer mediation work I was told about was aimed at reducing conflicts, but through a similar approach to the 'community method'. Rather than a small number of nominated children becoming mediators, the whole class was trained in mediation skills with the aim that they would use them as needed.

So we want mediation programmes to increase the numbers of mediators, for children to resolve their own problems. - Researcher

This approach was perceived as being effective in reducing the number of student conflicts.

After the peer mediation learning the troubles decreased, especially for the students who easily got angry. For example, the student who smashed the door - in 2nd grade [ages 13 to 14] he easily became angry and smashed something but in 3rd grade [ages 14 to 15] others told him to calm down so he was getting better. – Junior High Teacher Three

Cross-school practice was especially suited to helping students with the transition to a new school. This usually involved junior high students answering elementary students' questions about what it would be like there.

The most frequent question was from 6th grade students [ages 11 to 12] because for 6th grade students it is very hard. Can I be a junior high school student, can I study well? They

have many, many questions inside. So many 6th grade students write letters. – Education Supervisor

Whilst teachers interviewed about the cross-school peer tutoring system suggested that an academic benefit was not the aim, the participant who had created peer tutoring within mathematics classes had seen students' scores improve in all school grades.

Peer education had been used to tackle bullying in a technical high school; there were few bullying incidents initially but the teacher reported that students had been positively affected by the peer support work. In particular, less academic students had benefited.

Maybe some positive effects were implemented in students who are not good at thinking in an academic way but have some kind of intuition at doing such things. Have a more positive [reaction] to this activity, maybe. – Technical High School Teacher

The student summit, which involved student representatives from all of the city's junior high schools, aimed to create a better atmosphere in their schools and local communities through tackling specific areas: reducing bullying, cleaning streets, and greeting other students nicely.

Another peer support scheme trained all students in a junior high school, with the aim that pupils develop skills and for the oldest students to use their skills in work experience placements in the community.

Major theme 7: Features

In addition to the range of aims, a number of features emerged in peer support practice in Japan. Each feature was reported by a number of participants and was present in multiple examples of peer support. They are features of the way peer support systems were run, and what was considered important.

Sub-theme: Cross-age and cross-school

Much peer support practice was cross-age, with older pupils helping younger ones. As already identified the 'Japanese type' peer support favoured by the Government Researcher focused on older children doing activities to help younger pupils.

But for peer support to have a goal, cross-age is the tool for younger to get role models, older to get activities. – Government Researcher

Cross-age work could also be cross-school, mostly with junior high school students supporting elementary pupils but sometimes with high school students working with younger pupils e.g. as peer tutors.

As described under the sub-theme of education system, within the major theme of the influence of the Japanese context, junior high school pupils sometimes supported elementary students with the transition to the new school to reduce school refusal. This could be within a Q&A Handout system, where elementary students wrote about their anxieties and received answers from junior high school students. Such approaches involved older children helping younger ones, though sometimes within the same school.

The secrets [concerns] are [mostly] from 6th grade [ages 11 to 12] students but readers are from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. They can't be a supporter but they can be a reader. As for the 2nd grade [ages 7 to 8] some of them are writing consults just saying I was bullied and putting small paper in the box. So they are very pleased with the returning of the answers from the peer supporters. So maybe some children are using it again and again.- Elementary Teacher One

In this example peer supporters were initially just in grade 6 (ages 11 to 12), and then later from grade 5 (ages 10 to 11) too. Concerns were usually written by older students, but younger pupils sometimes asked for help and further received help from reading the newsletters.

Such cross-age support appeared to be very much enjoyed and appreciated by children, and to have positive effects.

Sub-theme: Training

There was a strong emphasis placed upon training in peer support. It was seen that for children to help each other, they needed to gain skills, particularly social skills. Indeed, as seen, some approaches only involved training without activities. One example is the training for peer mediation by a junior high school teacher.

In the training I did communication activities – like rolling a die and for each number discuss a particular topic. This means you discuss topics at random. I also made cards

about questions like: 'What do you think of this class?' 'What is your future dream?'. This was to help the students practice talking to other people. – Junior High Teacher Three

A more sophisticated training programme had been developed by one of the Senior JPSA members whilst working in a school. This involved sessions on: guidance on why they are doing the programme, relationships, communication skills, knowing ourselves, relaxation methods, peer mediation, planning of informal activities and following-up on activities.

In some systems completion of training, and use of skills, was recognised in a formal way, such as with certificates or notices placed around the school.

The workshop is made throughout the year ... at the end of March they talk to other students and about how they have acted [using peer support training]. At this day the pupils get a certificate. – Peer Support Trainer

Training sometimes included ensuring safe practice amongst children. For example, to ensure peer supporters did not keep a serious problem to themselves.

Nothing has happened so far but if it happens then we would talk to their class teacher and decide how to intervene. In the first meeting to be a peer tutor the students are instructed that if they are given information from a junior high student about a serious problem they must tell a teacher not keep it secret. - High School Teacher One

Sub-theme: Aimed at community

Peer support typically aimed at benefiting a whole community of students rather than a target population. Community cultivating approaches, where all children in a class or grade were trained, sought to foster a positive climate in a class and/or a school. Other approaches were also designed to create a good community climate but involved select peer supporters working with large numbers of other pupils.

Some examples of peer support involved the wider local community. For example, in the Q&A practice where volunteer students also carried out positive activities to improve the school climate, some of their work involved the local community e.g. by preparing and serving food at a festival, with positive effects.

Many people change their opinion of junior high school students ... They [the students] made a poster all over the town. They do the poster with some announcements on notice boards of the community, for residents of the community. Our volunteer students go out of the school and help someone. – Education Supervisor

The student summit run by this participant, bringing together representatives from all junior high schools in a city, also involved students working in their local community by street cleaning.

The example found of junior high pupils being trained in peer support and 3rd grade students (ages 14 to 15) using their skills in work experience placements, involved peer support being used to benefit the local community e.g. by students' work in kindergartens or nursing homes.

Peer supporters in a whole class befriending approach felt that the experience was useful for life outside school.

At first, beforehand and after the first session, I didn't understand what the purpose was. After the second session I understood, it is not just for class but for life ... In life relationships with others are important so good communication is needed. – Junior High Peer Supporter Two

Q&A Handout methods involved a select group of peer supporters but benefited and involved all children, and so were aimed at the wider school population.

Due to delivering the Q&A paper most of the children in the school can understand what's happening, the worries of one particular child. So they all know. And it's brought back to families so they know and also they can share the problem and ways to cope with it. – Elementary Teacher One

As illustrated by the above quote this method also involved students' families; parents were given copies of the newsletters so they could read about the types of concerns children were having. Parents had also been involved in the planning of the system and had created the box where pupils anonymously posted their concern papers.

Sub-theme: By pupils for pupils

Peer support was perceived to be valuable because children are better suited to help their peers than adults are. Participants conveyed the sense that effective peer support was run by pupils for pupils. Teachers recognised that it was not possible for them to know the entirety of children's situations.

At first some pupils see a fighting situation and report it to the teacher. I asked the students later if the situation was solved, but I couldn't know if it was. – Elementary Teacher Four

Opening up children's worlds to adults was an additional benefit of Q&A approaches because teachers and parents could also read the newsletters.

The teachers and parents can know what is happening in children's world. Sometimes its secrecy, sheltered behind. That's why if child themselves write their worries, something to reduce the problem, adults can know what they are worrying and think about the problem. – Elementary Teacher One

Harnessing pupils' power to effect change and help others was very important in the development of the Q&A Handout system described by the Education Supervisor. Prior to the Q&A system a lot of work was done to improve the climate of the school and the feelings of pupils following the traumatic loss of their previous teacher. The interviewee recognised that if staff had told the children to feel better about themselves or to change their behaviour, it would not be effective.

They [students] cannot think they are okay. So I think I should make them feel 'I'm okay'. But if I say 'you're okay', many students don't feel so. So I must create evidence to make them feel alright... - Education Supervisor

A group of volunteer students were recruited to perform activities like cleaning the school, and gradually the norms of behaviour became more positive. One student in particular took the lead in such activities and this had a great effect because this student was very popular. Such positive behaviour was seen to give students' improved self-worth and lay the ground for peer support to be effective. Within the Q&A Handout method, the

peer supporters were able to select which student concerns they wished to answer in the newsletter.

'I'm afraid of drowning in a 15m water pool.' When I read this [concern paper] I thought not to choose it, but many school committee students read it and thought this is a very good problem for us to answer because I have experienced this [worry]. I think students should answer not teachers. After that time I never commit [make] the selection [of which question to answer]. – Education Supervisor

Pupils also recognised the value of peers helping peers. Peer tutors in one school described how they were able to develop a mentoring style relationship with tutees. The quote below is from a peer supporter who had themselves been peer tutored when younger.

The tutors are a similar age compared to teachers, it was easy to ask questions. And they were kind enough to listen to your daily life worries, they don't talk about it to teachers. Every time I looked forward to it. I had it once or twice a month. - High School Peer Supporter Three

In this system, as in others, a large amount of responsibility was devolved to the peer supporters themselves which had the effect of boosting the confidence of the peer supporters.

High School Peer Supporter Two: I like to do it autonomously because I can do as I like to and I'm good at it.

High School Peer Supporter Three: I like to do it my own way. If I prepare by myself and see the junior high students happy and they have good adjustment it feels worth doing and I feel happy. – High School Peer Supporters Two and Three

In a couple of cases students had taken the initiative for peer support themselves. The student summit involving all of a city's junior high schools was prompted by one student telling a staff member about wanting to do something connecting students from all the schools. One interviewee described how the students trained in peer support in elementary school went on to implement peer support in their junior high school.

After this the 6th grade students [ages 11 to 12] went to junior high school. The junior high school is fed from two elementary schools, this one with peer support and one without. The junior high didn't do peer support and I wondered if the kids would carry on without me pushing them. But in the summer vacation, two months after the start of the school year, a kid called me and said we want to do peer support in our grade in junior high school. They had worked out a plan already and it seemed achievable. I realised that once I had given them the skills and self-efficacy they don't need the push. – Elementary Teacher Two

Although pupils working to support other pupils was generally seen as very effective, one participant mentioned the need to ensure peer supporters were not victimised. In the system where one pupil really took the lead in running peer support work, there were concerns that he would be hurt or derogated.

He [the student] was anxious at the first stage about whether he will do the role or continue. Other bad people, other bad people may say he shouldn't do that. If he was punched or kicked, that was very... I was worried. – Education Supervisor

It appeared that using a very popular student to lead peer support was very effective at changing group norms, but did involve a risk to that student.

Discussion

From this qualitative study a wealth of information about Japanese peer support emerged. A range of examples of peer support practice were identified, with varying aims and benefits. Features of peer support in Japan, and barriers to practice, were also seen in the data. Japanese peer support was in a state of evolution, with developments still being made to adapt systems to fit the national context and with conflicts between types of practice evident. Practitioners on the forefront of developing peer support in their schools appeared to need a lot of support during this process. These findings are discussed here, and also in relation to findings on the UK and South Korea in Chapter Four.

In some ways the information gathered reflected the previous literature discussed earlier, or deepened understanding of an issue, and in other respects it did not quite match. A key reason for the emergence of peer support seen in the literature was its potential to deal with school bullying, in the light of serious concerns in Japanese society about youth delinquency. Interviewees said less than might have been expected on bullying or violence in connection with peer support. Several examples of practice were

partly aimed at reducing bullying but this was certainly not the most common aim given for developing peer support. The findings of this study do not indicate a crisis where schools are struggling to cope with rising levels of violence amongst children. Indeed, as the Government Researcher noted, asocial behaviour rather than anti-social behaviour was the main problem amongst Japanese youth, with the related problem of school refusal.

However, there was a more subtle relationship between school bullying and peer support. Community approaches, also called befriending, usually trained a whole class or grade in peer support skills and reportedly had a positive effect upon pupils' interpersonal relationships. Conflicts were said to decrease, with other children being more likely to intervene at an early point. Examples of peer mediation taught skills in the community approach style, to whole classes, and were intended to decrease numbers of bystanders when conflicts occurred. Such positive effects upon the climate in a class or school may well lead to a reduction in bullying cases, and to bullying being stopped before it becomes very serious. *Ijime* predominantly involves social exclusion, meaning that peer support systems which improve children's communication and social skills are well placed to have a positive effect upon it.

The peer support cases which aimed to create a positive community atmosphere, fitted the descriptions of community cultivating approaches given in the past literature. Examples where a class or grade were given training in peer support and encouraged to use these skills in daily life were reported. Some of these practices included informal activities, such as students being supported in thinking of things they could do to help others, or formal activities, such as cleaning the school. These systems meet the educational model described by Cowie (2009). Other approaches included training only, with teachers having no sure way of knowing if the students were using their skills to help others. There were also cases where the central aim was cultivating a harmonious community but involved a select group of peer supporters from more than one class. These practices fit the supporter training dimension but seem to overlap with the community cultivating approaches that were identified by Ikemoto (n.d.). They also do not completely fit with the counselling model described by Cowie (2009), as tackling specific issues was a joint or more secondary aim/benefit. The picture was more complex than the categories suggested in the previous literature; peer support systems often overlapped across dimensions.

The emphasis upon fostering good social relationships appeared linked to the Japanese national context. Cowie (2009) suggested that strong group norms are important in Japanese society and my findings show that peer support was promoting adherence to

these. Peer support was adapted around the national context in other ways. Some difficulties in communication with others were perceived amongst Japanese people, which led some interviewees to favour anonymous approaches as it overcame the barrier of having to admit a problem to someone. Having a supervisor, i.e. a university professor, was seen by one participant to help develop peer support in the context of strictly hierarchical staff relationships. The strong links between peer support practitioners and university staff and students fitted with the existing literature, which includes examples of peer support run by undergraduate students for school pupils. The supportive relationship between teachers and university researchers appears to be linked to the early stage of development of Japanese peer support. One issue identified was a lack of skills amongst teachers delivering programmes, and support from more experienced people is one way of overcoming this barrier. This support, and the benefits of JPSA membership, can boost motivation in the light of lack of support from a teacher's school.

Lack of teachers' skills is another reason for the predominance of befriending/community cultivating approaches. Such programmes were perceived as easier to start with when a teacher had not run peer support previously. Cowie (2009) suggested that the imbalance between these approaches and counselling models was due to the readiness of schools; some schools are better placed to run more sophisticated methods. My findings suggest that it is rather the practitioners' level of readiness, their level of skill and experience, that explains this state of affairs. Some participants described initially running peer support training only, and then moving on to running training plus activities. An area for future research would be to look at whether there is a shift towards more formal, counselling based approaches as Japanese peer support practice becomes yet more established.

Peer support work at the current stage was particularly affected by the Japanese educational system. Although previous papers suggested that government changes to the system in the early 2000s had opened up opportunities for peer support use, in this study the system remained a clear barrier. It is hard to fit peer support training into the school curriculum, and running it outside class means it competes with other extracurricular activities for students' time. There is a great emphasis on club activities, and in systems with select groups of peer supporters this was especially problematic because the same pupils tended to be involved with both. A more positive influence of the education system was the development of cross-school peer support. Following elementary school, secondary education in Japan is divided into junior high and high school. High school students could support junior high students, e.g. in peer tutoring, and it was common for

junior high students to support elementary pupils. A key reason for the latter was the ability to address younger children's anxieties about the transition to junior high and reduce the national problem of school refusal. However, exams in the final grades of junior high and high school did make it difficult for peer supporters to remain involved at this point.

Interestingly, peer support in Japan was influenced both by the national context, the nature and importance of social relationships and the education system, and by practices in other countries. Rather than starting from scratch, JPSA strongly looked at building upon what was successful elsewhere. This can partly account for the rapid growth of peer support, but also contributed to conflict between JPSA's model of peer support and that favoured by the government. The Government Researcher identified two types of peer support, one based on Canadian practice and a 'Japanese type'. Other participants also perceived this division, and the divide seemed to come down to whether peer support focused upon benefiting peer supporters (as in 'Japanese type' cross-age approaches) or upon benefiting both peer supporters and other children (as in JPSA's model). This specific issue did not seem to be evident in the previous literature, though the conflict had been identified e.g. by Cowie (2009).

The findings from this study deepen current understanding and knowledge of Japanese peer support. The themes identified are consistent with much of the previous literature. Of course, it must be acknowledged that there were limitations to this study. The translation issues mean not all information provided by participants was conveyed fully and meant that some interviews were not as in-depth as desired. The selection of participants was largely determined by gatekeepers, in that I was quite reliant upon the people I was working with and their contacts. This means that the sample may not be fully representative of those involved in peer support practice in Japan. However, despite the small-scale nature of the work participants were well placed to provide a representative account of peer support across Japan. Interviewees were from several prefectures, and some, e.g. JPSA Senior Members, were well situated to have a solid overview of practice.

This study could be followed by further, more extensive, research. It would be very interesting to look at how Japanese peer support continues to evolve, whether it continues to be influenced by work elsewhere or takes on more fully its own national flavour. There is a crucial need now for rigorous, longitudinal evaluations of peer support in Japanese schools. Models appear to benefit young people but the evaluations reported by participants, and evident in the existing literature I could access, were largely limited to teacher observations or self-report measures immediately following peer support training. Such in-depth case studies would benefit practitioners in Japan, in terms of providing

evidence and practice points, but would also be a valuable contribution to the international peer support literature.

The ongoing evolution in Japan provides a fascinating opportunity to track how peer support develops and adapts to a national context and cultural values. Peer support remains popular internationally and ongoing research into Japanese development could be of great value to practitioners in other countries where peer support is gaining ground.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined previous knowledge of peer support in Japan, and detailed a small qualitative exploration of Japanese practice. This research was made possible by a fellowship awarded by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science/British Council, which funded a placement in Osaka University of Education. Examples of peer support in Japan have previously been documented, and categorised in several ways. Despite there being a national association for peer support, and indications it is gaining popularity, little previous literature exists in English. This study provided an investigation of Japanese peer support through interviews with key informants working in this field. Descriptive analysis identified a range of practices, and thematic analysis identified seven major themes, each with sub-themes. Peer support practice is evolving in Japan, with adaptations for the national context, but with conflicts between approaches. Barriers to running peer support were identified, but practitioners were able to access support from a number of sources. A variety of aims were evident, with reported benefits for pupils and schools. A particular emphasis on community was seen, with peer support often aimed at cultivating a harmonious student community and some examples involved links with the wider community.

Chapter Three: An Exploration of Peer Support and other Anti-Bullying Work in South Korea

Introduction

This chapter presents a small-scale investigation into the use of peer support in schools in South Korea, as well as other anti-bullying work in this country. During my PhD I had the opportunity to be part of a British Council PMI 2 project on 'Anti-bullying interventions in the UK and Korea', led by Professor Peter K. Smith at Goldsmiths, University of London, and Professor Keumjoo Kwak at Seoul National University. As part of the project I was able to spend one month in the Developmental Psychology team at Seoul National University. This was a good opportunity to investigate peer support use in an Eastern country, but it was necessary to widen this study to include other anti-bullying work.

From discussions with members of the team in South Korea it appeared that peer support was not common in schools and that it would be difficult to obtain a lot of information about this. Therefore I widened the aims of this study to also include an exploration of the nature of school bullying and the general approach to anti-bullying in South Korea. I decided to look not only at peer support use, but also at attitudes towards the potential for peer support. There is a scarcity of articles on peer support in South Korea in English language journals, but I review some literature on this below, as well as the literature available on school bullying in South Korea.

Peer support in South Korea

It initially appeared that peer support did not exist in South Korea, as I had not previously found studies in English-language journals and Korean colleagues were not very familiar with the concept. On closer investigation however, forms of peer support are used but the concept of 'peer support' is not as established or widespread as in other countries.

One example of peer support I came across was a document detailing peer mediation training conducted by the Centre for Peace Education in Cincinnati in America (Jordan, n.d.). This described multiple visits to train teachers in the Seoul Metropolitan School District. It suggested that the training typically did not result in teachers creating a peer mediation system in their school, but rather supporting conflict management with their pupils. Unfortunately I could find no further reports on this work and did not receive replies to my enquiries.

I was also informed by Korean colleagues that it is quite common for South Korean schools to have a student group called *Sun-do Boo*, volunteers who guide other students,

and class representatives who may do some activities to support their class when asked by their teacher. Although these are not examples of formal peer support practices, they do seem to involve the essential element of pupils helping other pupils.

Although the term 'peer support' does not seem to be widely used, formal peer counselling has been used in the South Korean school system since the 1990s (Rho & Kim, 2004 and 2007). Peer counselling involves counselling activities run by pupils for other pupils of a similar age (Rho & Kim, 2007). Unfortunately, studies of peer counselling have so far only been reported in Korean language journals, making it difficult to obtain information about this. I was however given English translations of two studies of peer counselling in South Korea. It has been described as developing from university practice, where peers who experienced group counselling were encouraged to become involved in peer counselling as a leader or co-leader (Rho & Kim, 2004 and 2007). The Korean Youth Counselling Institute (KYCI, part of the Ministry of Culture) then developed a national project in 1994, with peer counselling programs for primary and secondary school pupils. This project appeared to be very large-scale; between 1995 and 2004 over 48,500 children were trained as peer counsellors and over 5700 teachers and counsellors trained to be supervisors for peer counselling (as cited in Rho & Kim, 2007).

Reasons reported for using peer counselling in South Korea are similar to those reported for the popularity of peer support in other countries. Peer counselling is considered important because peers are more likely to share their problems with peers and friends than with adults, and to have shared understanding of problems (Rho & Kim, 2007). It is also felt that peer counselling can prevent problems becoming more serious, and provide an extra source of support where school counsellors are limited. As identified in the previous chapter for peer support generally, adult supervision appears to be important. A study identified seven criteria for the establishment of a formal peer counselling system in South Korean high schools, which included that there are trained teachers and that supervision or training is carried out once or twice every month (Rho & Kim, 2007). Other criteria were that a peer counselling group is formed in the school, there are peer counselling groups in each grade, training or activities occur over 30 hours per year, pupils can access peer counsellors when they have a problem, and that the peer counselling group has been operating for over four years. As reported elsewhere, it seems that it takes time for a formal peer support system to be considered an established part of a school.

A meta-analysis of the efficacy of peer counselling looked at 36 studies of school pupils, university students and other adults, from 1990 to 2003 (Rho & Kim, 2004). A large

mean effect size was found overall, indicating that the observed impacts of the peer counselling in the studies were strong. The effect size was largest for university peer counsellors, then middle school pupils, adults, high school pupils, and much lower for elementary school peer counsellors. Peer counselling was found to have positive effects upon school-related attitudes, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, and particularly on delinquency. The authors made a cautious suggestion that peer counselling could have a positive impact upon school violence or *wang-ta*.

However it appeared that by the time of my placement in South Korea, the KYCI had stopped running this peer counselling project – based on information I could obtain from their website and from asking people whilst in South Korea. It seems likely though that the peer counselling groups developed would still be in operation in many schools.

Clearly a formal form of peer support, peer counselling, has been rolled out in many schools in South Korea with a lot of government backing. The aims, to provide pupils with additional pastoral support from peers rather than adults, and approach, training for peer supporters with supervision from adults, appear to be similar in nature to peer support in other countries. However, it is unclear from the information I could access to what extent this system continues and what impact it actually has. It is also unclear whether other forms of peer support exist in South Korea, and what general attitudes towards peer support are.

School bullying in South Korea

Given that peer support as a concept is not as well established in South Korea, I also investigated the nature of bullying in South Korea and anti-bullying initiatives. As summarised in the previous chapter, bullying behaviours have different characteristics in different countries. In Eastern countries bullying has been reported as being predominantly social exclusion of a student by their peers (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002; Koo et al., 2008; Morita et al., 1999). When looking at bullying in South Korea, researchers usually describe *wang-ta*, which refers to this sort of social isolation. However, Korean bullying can involve a much wider range of behaviours, and there is a growing body of research looking at both the behaviours and the terminology used by Korean pupils.

School bullying became a topic of research in South Korea in the mid-1990s, following concerns about *ijime* in Japan, and later serious incidents of bullying resulting in suicide led to bullying becoming a topic of public and government concern (Koo et al., 2008). Early studies of bullying in South Korea used a range of terms to refer to bullying: *gipdan-ttadolim*, which refers to group isolation, *gipdan-gorophim*, meaning group-

harassment, and *hakkyo pokryuk*, meaning general school violence (for a review of these studies, see Koo et al., 2008). A criticism of these studies is that they did not use the term most comparable to 'bullying' – *wang-ta*, partly because this was a colloquialism and the Korean Ministry of Education discouraged this term (Koo et al., 2008).

The literal meaning of *wang-ta* is 'king of isolated people', as such it can be used to refer to both a victim of bullying and the type of bullying. Koo (2005) found that the most frequent form of *wang-ta* identified by participants was verbal taunting, although it was also linked to acts of social exclusion. There were also nuances of social exclusion, described by different terms. *Eun-ta* was a less severe, indirect form of exclusion, *wang-ta* involved the whole class excluding the victim, and *jun-ta* was where the victim was excluded by the whole school (Koo, 2005). Overall though, it appears that *wang-ta* is the most comparable Korean word for 'bullying' and is now used in most studies.

Surveys of bullying in South Korea suggest that there are greater numbers of bullies than victims, in line with the nature of *wang-ta* described above. A large-scale survey of pupils aged 11 to 16 across five regions of South Korea, using an adapted version of the Olweus instrument, found that 5.8% pupils said they had been a victim of *wang-ta*, whilst 10.2% reported bullying others in this way (Koo et al., 2008). The bullying behaviours were predominantly verbal, followed by relational, and mostly involved same age peers, with more girls acting as bullies. A large survey of middle school children, using the Korean-Peer Nomination Inventory (K-PNI) where behaviours but not terms were given, found that 17% of pupils could be classified as perpetrators compared to 14% as victims and 9% as victim-perpetrators (Kim, Koh and Leventhal, 2004). Exclusion and verbal taunting were the most reported forms of bullying. Another large survey using self-report measures with primary school pupils, found that 12% were bullies, 5.3% victims, and 7.2% bully/victims (Yang, Kim, Kim, Shin & Yoon, 2006). The rates of bullying are around the average international average reported rates, or on the low end of the scale, e.g. a review of surveys in individual countries found reported victimisation rates of between 9 to 32% and a survey of 35 countries found an average victimisation rate of 11% (Stassen Berger, 2007; Craig & Harel, 2004, as cited in Salmivalli, 2010). However, the greater proportions of bullies than victims reported in the above surveys in Korea indicate that Korean victims tend to experience bullying by multiple perpetrators. This contrasts to bullying in Western countries, where bullying is usually perpetrated by much smaller groups.

As in other countries, involvement in bullying in South Korea has been shown to have serious detrimental effects on young people. In the study using the K-PNI, victim-

perpetrators and female pupils in all bullying groups, reported having had significantly more suicidal ideation and self-harmful behaviours in the past six months than students not involved in bullying (Kim, Koh & Leventhal, 2005). A study of students in two middle schools concluded that psychopathologic behaviour was a consequence of bullying involvement, with victims having increased risk of social problems at follow-up, perpetrators having increased aggression, and victim-perpetrators having both increased aggression and externalizing problems (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard & Boyce, 2006). Interestingly, a study that looked at three categories of bullies in middle-school pupils found that previous experience of being victimised was the most important factor increasing bullying behaviours (Lee, 2010).

The latter study also found associations between bullying behaviours and fun-seeking tendency, and influence of teachers and parents for some groups only. Another study looked at characteristics of victimised pre-school children, finding links with neglectful/rejected parenting, aggression, withdrawal, and conflict in relationships with teachers (Shin & Kim, 2008). The authors suggested that teachers in Korea are particularly strong authority figures, with the ability to protect children from peer victimisation. However, withdrawal and aggression were noted to be characteristics associated with risk of victimisation in Western settings as well. Bullies, on the other hand, have been found to have significantly higher tendencies towards impulsivity and dominance than victims in a Korean setting (Lee, 2010).

Few studies of bullying interventions in South Korea have been reported, and at least up to the mid-2000s interventions and group counselling for victims were rare (Kim, 2006). A small scale study of a bullying prevention program reported positive treatment effects; victims had increased self-responsibility and experienced less victimisation compared with controls (Kim, 2006). The program drew upon reality therapy, choice theory and the Olweus program group counselling approach, and involved two training sessions per week for five weeks. A school violence prevention program using traditional play for primary school children has also been reported, with different aims for bullies, victims, bully-victims and children not involved in bullying (Jang, 2005).

Overall, bullying in South Korea can be said to typically involve social exclusion of a child by a large number of peers. The behaviours involved are likely to be relational bullying and verbal taunting, committed by children of the same age. There has been some confusion about the best terms to use in studies investigating bullying, and participants may well use multiple terms relating to different nuances of bullying behaviours. However, *wang-ta* has been established as the term most comparable to

bullying and I will use this term to refer to Korean bullying. As in Western countries, involvement in bullying is associated with child characteristics and negative outcomes, but few intervention studies have yet to be reported.

In summary, it is difficult to obtain information on peer support use in South Korean schools but it appears that at least one form is commonly used. A greater amount of information is available on bullying in South Korea, but little has been reported on anti-bullying initiatives. This study provides a small-scale exploration of these areas.

Aims of this study

The aims of this study were to:

- explore the use of peer support in South Korean schools and/or attitudes towards this
- explore the nature of school bullying in South Korea
- explore the range of anti-bullying initiatives used in South Korean schools

Methodology

Research design

A qualitative study, using interviews with key informants working in peer support and/or bullying.

Participants

Participants were key informants in the areas of school bullying and peer support. Key informants were considered to be people well-placed to have knowledge of school bullying and/or anti-bullying work, or of peer support use. I decided to look for participants who worked or had worked in schools, as part of local education boards, in relevant government departments, in other organisations connected to school bullying, and for researchers who had conducted work on school bullying.

I found participants through contacts of other people and by searching on the internet. Researchers at Seoul National University arranged interviews with their personal contacts. I was also put in contact with Professor Hyojin Koo at Woosuk University in the less urban region of Jeollabuk-do, through Professor Smith. I spent a brief placement at this university, where the Professor arranged interviews with her personal contacts. I further personally contacted people I identified on the internet and successfully arranged

some interviews. Unfortunately I received no response to multiple attempts to contact the centre in America which had conducted peer mediation in Seoul, and was unsuccessful in arranging a meeting with an Education Supervisor in Seoul.

Altogether, there were 13 participants, including three researchers, five teachers, one member of a regional education office, three representatives from a children's charity, and one senior government worker within health, welfare and family affairs. Further details of participants are given in Appendix II.

Instruments

Semi-structured interview schedules were prepared.

- i) Interview Schedule for Teachers – questions were separated into two parts: one on school bullying and one on peer support. At the start of the section on peer support, the concept was briefly described and examples given of the types of peer support systems used in UK schools. It included questions on understanding of the nature of school bullying, their perceptions of how bullying was viewed by society, anti-bullying work in their school, what type of anti-bullying work they felt was effective, if their school used peer support, and their attitudes towards peer support. Based upon suggestions from Korean colleagues, teachers were also asked if their school had *Sun-do Boo* or class representatives.
- ii) Interview Schedule for Researchers – questions on their knowledge of bullying and peer support, their experience of research into bullying or peer support, perceptions of how bullying was viewed by society, and their attitudes towards peer support.
- iii) Interview Schedule for government or other organisation representatives – questions were separated into a part on bullying and a part on peer support, preceded by a brief explanation with examples from the UK. It included questions on their understanding of school bullying, their perceptions of how bullying was viewed by society, their experience of work related to school bullying and/or peer support, what type of anti-bullying work they felt was effective, their awareness of any peer support work in South Korean schools and their attitudes towards it.

Procedure

As described above, participants were contacted by myself, by researchers at Seoul National University or by the Professor at Woosuk University. Semi-structured interviews were held which typically lasted around one hour and were digitally recorded, with two exceptions noted in the table of participants in Appendix II. Several participants requested copies of the interview questions in advance to help them prepare. Interviews occurred in the participant's place of work or a convenient meeting place such as a university office.

For interviews conducted in Seoul, a student undertaking a work experience placement in the team acted as a translator during the interviews and liaised on my behalf with participants who did not speak English. For interviews in Jeollabuk-do, a postgraduate student acted as translator and liaised with all participants. During an interview with the charity representative in this area another person accompanied who also assisted with translation. The translators received copies of the interview schedules in advance and translated the questions into Korean. For three participants, interviews were conducted in English.

Several difficulties were encountered whilst conducting the research. Gaining access to participants was difficult, given that I was largely relying upon other people's contacts, and the language barrier meant I was unable to speak directly to most potential participants. I often found that I did not have access to a lot of information about participants in advance and thus needed to adjust the questions accordingly during the interviews.

Although semi-structured interview schedules were created, in practice it was very difficult to use these. Translation difficulties often meant questions were not understood clearly and thus participants sometimes gave information in response relating to a separate issue, taking the interview in a different direction. The extra time that simultaneous translation involved also meant that it could be difficult to cover all areas within the available time. Participants often approached the research session as a meeting rather than a formal interview, meaning that interviews could stray off-question. This was particularly the case with two researchers, where the interviews were much more informal.

In addition, participants were not always familiar with the notion of peer support systems, meaning that detailed questions on this area were sometimes not appropriate.

Overall however I feel that sufficient participant numbers were obtained for a small-scale study of this nature, and useful data on school bullying and peer support were collected.

Ethical practice

This study was conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Ethical Guidelines. All participants were informed before the interviews commenced that their participation was voluntary, their names would not be published in relation to the research, and they could withdraw at any moment.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed and then the transcripts analysed for content and themes. Descriptive analysis was performed to identify information on the nature of school bullying in South Korea, examples of anti-bullying initiatives, and examples of peer support use. Thematic analysis was also conducted to identify overall themes relating to school bullying and peer support. As in Chapter Two, this was conducted in accordance with the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes to describe interesting aspects of the data, searching for themes amongst the codes, reviewing the themes in relation to the whole data set, creating a diagram to illustrate the themes, and clearly defining and naming the themes.

Findings

Findings from this study are presented in two sections. First the descriptive findings on the nature of school bullying in South Korea, examples of anti-bullying work and examples of peer support use in South Korean schools are given. The findings of the thematic analysis exploring the data are then provided.

Where quotations are used to provide information or illustrate themes in the data, they may have been adjusted to be easily understood by the reader. This is necessary for some quotations where a translator had interpreted the participant's response, and there were some minor mistakes in the translator's use of English. I do not feel this affects the accuracy of the information, rather it is improving the translation and making the participant's meaning clearer.

Descriptive analysis: The nature of school bullying

School bullying in South Korea was often referred to as part of a larger problem – school violence, or youth violence. School violence encompasses all aggressive acts between pupils, including both one-off aggressive acts and repeated acts of aggression against particular individuals. This meant that when discussing the behaviours involved

participants sometimes referred to school violence as a whole, although it appeared that similar behaviours were involved.

Here school violence includes bullying, physical violence, wang-ta, isolations that result in wang-ta, different types. – Government Officer

Terms used

A number of words could be used to refer to bullying, such as *jun-ta*, *eun-ta* and *wang-ta*. Most frequently used was *wang-ta*, which appeared to be the term used to refer to bullying in general. One researcher noted that initially *wang-ta* was not the recommended word, but that research led to this becoming the established term. One of the teachers interviewed felt that the establishment of the word *wang-ta* had actually led to increased social attention on the issue of bullying.

Bullying behaviours

Participants were clear that there were a number of types of bullying, and that it involved different behaviours. Most participants referred to social isolation, the exclusion of a pupil by others, although some noted that this may not be deliberately hurtful. Physical violence was also frequently mentioned, with one teacher suggesting that bullying typically began with isolation and then developed into physical aggression if it continued over a long period of time. There was also a suggestion that there are higher rates of physical violence in South Korea than in other countries, although this seemed to refer to school violence overall rather than bullying.

I do not really know how to categorise the types of bullying, however there a lot of different sort of features. I mean for instance a student can be physically bullied, hitting and that, whereas for other cases the student could be bullied quietly. You know, part of isolations. There are many types. – High School Teacher Three

It was clear that school bullying was largely covert in nature. Although it tended to be seen as infrequent or rare, involving few victims in a school, it could be long-term and severe partly because it remained hidden. Bullying was typically described as involving indirect social aggression, meaning that staff may well not be aware it is occurring.

He says the problem is that maybe the person is very isolated amongst the students but it is very difficult for teachers to notice it. Because apparently it is okay and so even though that kind of thing happens the teachers cannot always see it. – Elementary School Teacher 1

Participants in bullying

Bullying was described by participants as involving large groups of students bullying one victim. Perpetrators were seen as otherwise good students; they were likely to be happy, popular, high academic achievers and from good family backgrounds. This was particularly stressed in interviews with two of the researchers; bullies seemed to form a popular clique of students, who set the norms of behaviour, and others aspired to be part of this group. It appears that ostracism of a particular student may be initiated by a popular group of students, and then others follow this lead meaning that whole classes become perpetrators.

The big finding was that bullies were very happy. They have a lot of friends, are interested in teasing others, they are smart and some have good academic achievement. So some of their peers want to be a bully, to go into their group. – Researcher Three

One of the researchers felt that these sorts of peer relations played a role in why bullying happened, but also that the children in these sorts of cliques shared individual traits.

Definitely a mix of both. Individual traits, in terms of individual traits I guess there, they are... you are thinking about a clique of students and even though they share single individual characteristics that will not be the most important factor that affects them. Definitely there are some peer factors so that is more a question about the relationships I guess. – Researcher One

Victims on the other hand were identified as children who were different from their peers in some way. As discussed below, pupils' individual differences, and the inability of others to tolerate these, was seen as the main cause of bullying. A victim may be identified as different due to things like the way they interact with others, their appearance or academic ability.

...the victims in some cases are, their personalities seem to be negative or violent. They talk [about] anything they want so that's why the peers do not like them, but in some cases they become victims because of their different preferences or different outlook. – High School Teacher One

The behaviours involved in bullying did not appear to vary with students' ages, but there was some suggestion that it was more severe for older pupils.

...the more serious problem is that when they grow older the problem is getting more and more severe. – Elementary School Teacher 2

Causes of bullying

Bullying in South Korean schools was reported as stemming from individual differences not being accepted by pupils. It is important to note that participants mentioned both 'good' and 'bad' differences; someone may be victimised because others look down upon them or because they are jealous.

They don't like both, there are two types. Maybe one type is very jealous and one type looks down upon the person. So because of those types of things bullying happens. – Elementary School Teacher 1

Teachers, as well as pupils, were identified as thinking that the victims should not be different from their peers.

Students and teachers don't recognize it is serious. They think the victim has untypical characteristics so others think he is not normal and criticize or hurt him. – Researcher Three

One participant, the Government Officer, also suggested that bullying occurred because of students' increasing access to the internet and the desire to imitate violent behaviours seen online.

Korea is one of the countries that uses the internet the most, most often, and most of the youth can use internet pretty well. And sort of because there has been violent behaviours

or game programs that are around on the internet, children sort of imitate the behaviour of the features that have been seen. – Government Officer

The particular school population was also identified as contributing to whether bullying happened. Bullying was seen as being less frequent and less severe in more affluent areas and in non-urban areas. It was also considered to be more frequent in vocational schools.

I think that in the areas of Korea some have less bullying and some have more. The city is very large and rich, there is less bullying, higher than in urban areas. Rich areas and schools have low bullying. Parents sometimes make their children move to low bullying areas. – Researcher Three

It was also proposed that it depended upon the specific class population, as it did not occur in every class, and upon the class teacher's attitude towards bullying – if the teacher is active in preventing it, less bullying is likely to happen.

And also it depends by the main teacher's attitudes to the bullying. For instance, if the teacher sort of uses physical force to prevent the bullying, sometimes the bullying doesn't really happen as much. – High School Teacher Two

Outcomes of bullying

Bullying was frequently identified as having severe and long-term psychological effects on both victims and bullies. Pupils were seen as often requiring counselling or psychiatric treatment as a consequence, and counselling initiatives formed a large part of the anti-bullying work described by interviewees. Suicide was mentioned as a real possibility for both victims and perpetrators.

However another class was involved in like physical bullying and like group bullying. So there has been one case where a student killed herself. – High School Teacher Three

What's really strange is perpetrators who cause other victims to commit suicide, in the end they commit suicide as well. – Charity Representative One

High-profile cases of suicide were said to have prompted government work on bullying in the past, and it appears suicide amongst young people involved in bullying remained a serious issue.

Descriptive analysis: Examples of anti-bullying initiatives

Anti-bullying methods reported by interviewees fell into both proactive and reactive strategies. Given that school bullying forms part of the larger category of school violence, some initiatives are included which addressed school violence overall.

Initiatives included national government laws and policies, approaches used in individual schools, and methods used by other organisations involved in anti-bullying work. Interviewees reported that a large number of organisations were involved in anti-bullying/anti-school violence work, including specialist organisations and ones with other primary objectives. Detailed information about the proactive and reactive anti-bullying initiatives described by participants is given in Appendix II. It should be noted that these examples were provided by participants, and so may not be completely factually accurate.

Descriptive analysis: Examples of peer support use

Although some participants were not familiar with the concept of peer support systems in schools, examples of peer support practice did emerge. These included government supported initiatives, teacher initiatives and charity initiatives. Whilst these were not the formal peer support systems evident in many UK schools for example, they were initiatives where the spirit of peer support – young people supporting other young people – was evident. One teacher also felt that peer support was something that happens naturally amongst pupils in rural areas, where there are fewer children.

Detailed information on the examples of peer support described by participants is provided in Appendix II. Participants' attitudes towards, and ideas about, peer support use are reported in detail in the thematic analysis findings below.

Thematic analysis findings

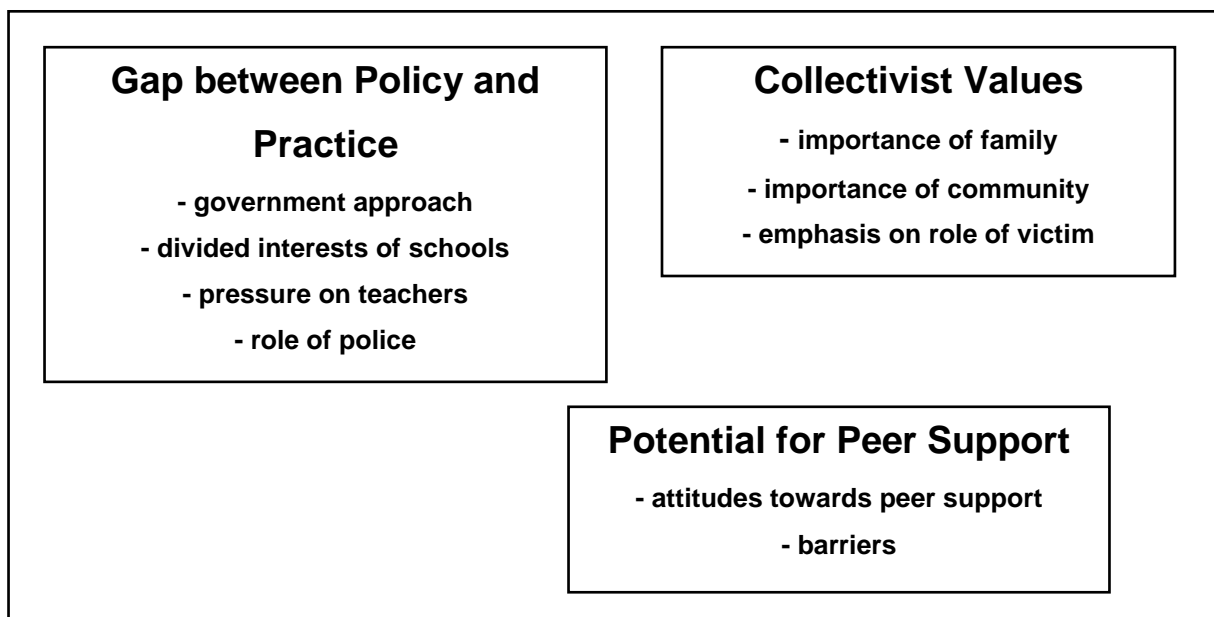
A number of themes were identified relating to anti-bullying work and peer support, relating for example to participants' attitudes or how issues appeared to be perceived in society as a whole. Three major, overarching themes were identified: Gap Between Policy and Practice, Collectivist Values and Potential for Peer Support. Each of these comprised at least two sub-themes. The major themes and sub-themes are summarised in Figure 3.1,

and descriptions are given below with illustrative quotes. The themes are discussed at the end of this chapter, and in relation to findings from Japan and the UK in Chapter Four.

Major theme 1: Gap between policy and practice

School bullying has received a lot of attention in South Korea since high profile cases of victim suicide in the mid-1990s. These resulted in a great increase in anti-bullying research, practice and government policy. However, a sense that there was a gap between policy and practice emerged in the interviews. That is, what was intended to happen in terms of anti-bullying work did not always happen or was ineffective. This was evident from the level of government policy down to the classroom level.

Figure 3.1: Major themes and sub-themes identified from interviews on school bullying, anti-bullying work and peer support in South Korea



Sub-theme: Government approach

From the data collected the government appeared to take school bullying as a very serious issue and was attempting to tackle it through legislation, regional anti-bullying plans, making provisions for counsellors and supporting schools and teachers in preventing bullying.

This office of education gives regulations and rules to schools. If there are any problems with these rules the schools report it to [the participant] and together they find a solution. These regulations are more for prevention not intervention. There is a strong effort at the moment on anti-bullying work. – Education Office Member

Whilst the intentions were seen as laudable by participants, it appeared that the government's approach was not addressing the issues effectively and that it sometimes amounted to lip service rather than serious action.

I agree with the government approach, however I really do think that there should be a more practical approach. – High School Teacher One

One teacher particularly felt that the overall approach taken to education was preventing anti-bullying work from having a real impact. This teacher described the approach as being administrative, rather than educational, in that it prescribed what ought to happen rather than listening to pupils' voices or address the actual situations in schools.

So the situation here is that the school system is sort of applying the administrative approach rather than the educational approach ... So the educational approach is about listening to students' voices and students' problems. It's more practical. It has to come from the students themselves ... And the administrative approach is about warning the students that they will be punished if the wang-ta happens. And it's not about hearing the students' voices but rather it's like going outside. It's not the practical it's indirect. For example, one instance of the administrative approach is not about increasing the counselling rooms but rather hiring the policemen to the schools. – High School Teacher Two

The representatives from the charity also felt that the government's approach was unhelpful. They particularly identified the use of trained teacher specialists to work across schools as being problematic, as they were ultimately government employees.

The representatives' experience was that this meant the school, class teachers, parents and pupils would not open up to them.

And the school themselves, they use a kind of supporters who are teachers. But they don't belong to one school, they go from school to school and listen to the problems. And the problem is that the pupils don't open their hearts to these helpers or these workers. – Charity Representative One

As seen in the next sub-theme it was not in schools' interests to reveal the extent of a bullying problem to the government. The charity advocated the need for independent experts funded largely by parents of pupils.

During the 1990s there were two national anti-bullying programmes initiated by the government, the *HELPing* and *Si Woo Bo Woo* programmes. The government funded research into the *HELPing* programme's effectiveness, which found positive results, but did not fund research on the *Si Woo Bo Woo* programme. The latter programme was an anti-bullying video to be shown in schools, and unlike the earlier programme did not include multiple sessions or activities. One researcher expressed the feeling that it would be impossible to prevent bullying with this alone.

I was really surprised because they only wanted ten or fifteen minutes of pupils watching a movie. If I could reduce bullying with this I would win a Nobel Prize. – Researcher Three

Whilst the government was funding action against bullying, the approach seemed to be limited. The resources developed for these programmes are no longer available to teachers, suggesting that the work was also limited in that it was not sustained.

Additionally another researcher felt that government members were in reality only interested in anti-bullying work if it would lead to a positive image. Another problem this interviewee identified was that when the government did do anti-bullying work they tended not to listen to experts in this area, either not involving them at all or consulting people who were not really experts.

So I feel a little frustrated with the policy makers who don't take advice from the experts. Or they do it, they say... but the programme experts, so-called experts, are not an expert. – Researcher Two

One way that the government, and regional ministries for education, tried to tackle bullying was through sending material to schools, to be delivered to pupils as part of bullying prevention work. However, one teacher said that the material may well not make its way to class teachers in the school never mind pupils.

Sometimes the government give out sort of documents in written form that talk about how to, about the wang-ta, the seriousness of wang-ta. And even [though] it's being distributed to the school, and even if, well sometimes actually the document doesn't even transfer to the teachers. – High School Teacher Three

There was also the suggestion that there was inconsistency in whether schools followed the regulations set by the government, potentially not delivering the required prevention work with pupils. The charity representative also felt that such programmes did not allow for depth or different pupils' ages.

The problem for giving out the prevention programs just once a semester is that sometimes you cannot go into more depth and because sometimes the school collects all the students and give out the announcement. There have been differences among the grade levels so sometimes it's not very accommodating. So I believe that there should be more programs. The main difficulty is that all schools are supposed to give out the program but it's not the case. – Charity Representative Three

Sub-theme: Divided interests of schools

Schools were held responsible when bullying occurred and the first piece of legislation relating to bullying required them to report all instances of bullying to their regional ministry for education. However, in reality it did not appear to be in a school's best interests to report bullying. As bullying was considered such a serious problem, admitting to a bullying problem could damage the school's reputation and the head teacher's career. In practice therefore, hiding bullying was identified as being a potentially better option for schools.

So they've tried to sort of conceal the fact that the bullying is happening inside of the school. So the most important thing here is that the schools need to reveal that the bullying is happening inside of school, and second the principals should not be sort of, to conceal that the bullying is happening. Oh and everyone should not sort of blame the

schools themselves that the bullying is happening. They should not feel that the school itself is only responsible for the bullying. – High School Teacher Two

When the bullying actually happens the government or the education administration office put the responsibility to the principal and as a result when the principal has to go on to other places for higher, you know, higher classes or higher jobs it directly affects their career. So for the schools, when the bullying actually happens they are really busy only to cover the problem, only to cover it. – High School Teacher Two

This feeds into the possibility that independent bullying experts would be more effective than government trained experts. If admitting the extent of a bullying problem would have negative consequences for a school, it is unlikely that staff would wish to openly disclose details to a government expert.

Yes and this expert has to be independent. Independent from government and may not receive the money, so his money or earnings, from the government. This is what they support. Because otherwise, if the worker is working for the government he gets an insight of the school and the school doesn't want to be so... served on a plate. Charity Representative One

Another reason schools' interests were divided was that the education system placed a great emphasis on academic achievement. This meant that teachers' primary aim was to ensure their students succeed academically, rather than deal with bullying.

Partly because we have so many exams and focus on achievements, partly another reason is that teachers are not thinking of bullying. They are evaluated based on how many students go to the good universities instead of how many good students you rear. – Researcher One

For high school pupils in particular, the focus on college entrance exams was also perceived by one interviewee as a barrier to doing bullying prevention work.

Sometimes an effective prevention plan can be applied successfully for middle school students but after that, because of the Korean system, the high school system, it is very difficult for high school students to follow the prevention plans. – High School Teacher Two

Sub-theme: Pressure on teachers

When bullying occurred in a school, the class teacher was considered primarily responsible for the situation, followed by the school principal.

The most responsible person as I understand is the teacher in the classroom itself. – High School Teacher One

There was a sense that this put teachers under pressure and that they were unequipped with the knowledge needed to deal with bullying. It appeared placing such responsibility for bullying upon the teachers was meant to encourage them to prevent bullying from occurring or to nip it in the bud. In practice, this did not seem to be happening. Without specialist knowledge or training, teachers seemed to have to rely upon their own initiative to try to resolve situations, which may or may not be effective.

As well as not having the knowledge to intervene effectively, one researcher suggested that teachers may be scared of the pupils. This participant thought this was related to having too large class sizes.

The teachers sometimes feel so helpless, they feel scared of the kids. They just don't feel like they can effectively intervene. Which is a problem. Probably I think in Korea still the class size is really big and one teacher has 40 or more than 40 children which is too much. – Researcher Two

Training had become available however for teachers. One teacher reported that she had received some specialist training which was beneficial. Teachers could train to become the specialist teachers, although this seemed to mean that they would then perform this special role and no longer be a class teacher. As described earlier it was also reported that booklets were produced by the government sharing details of individual teachers' good practice. Overall, though, it seemed that more training on bullying issues would be welcomed by teachers and help them to deal with the responsibility placed upon them.

I'm also hoping that the teachers can be trained to become professional counsellors. I'm hoping that there will be a lot of programs for teachers in order to be, to familiarize more about how to counsel with the students. – High School Teacher One

If they make guidelines for teaching students how to behave then the teachers are happy to follow them, but often they want more guidance for helping students. – Education Office Member

An outcome of teachers being largely responsible for bullying, was that it meant it was easier for teachers to ignore it. This would not be hard to do given the generally hidden nature of bullying. It would be unlikely that another member of staff would become aware.

Teachers, well in Korea, teachers are responsible for that class for one year. And they sometimes think that as long as they can be tolerable with that bullying, and the bullying doesn't really occur like as a serious problem, you know, they just sometimes remain quiet. – High School Teacher Three

As seen above, for teachers to admit that there was a bullying problem had negative consequences. In addition, bullying being instigated by a group of children who were otherwise good students could act as a deterrent for taking action. Parents of these pupils were likely to be influential people, and not to take the news that their child was a perpetrator of bullying well.

The overall picture in terms of the role that teachers played when bullying occurred was one of inconsistency. Some teachers may be very active and develop their own strategies for tackling it, whilst others may either not see it as a serious problem or try to ignore it.

When the wang-ta actually happens it really depends on the main teacher in charge of that classroom. Rather than the vice-president or administrators of the school. So most cases their teacher try to take care of it of themselves. But it also depends on teachers, depends on how they really react to the bullying. – High School Teacher Three

Teachers may also be involved in serious cases of bullying. One researcher described a case of cyber-bullying where children recorded the physical bullying of a pupil on a mobile phone and put it on a website. The incident had occurred in the presence of a teacher who did not intervene. The same researcher had been involved in the psychiatric treatment of a girl who had been bullied by a group of seven older girls. When her parents told the teacher, the teacher asked the bullies about it. This led to the bullies tying up the victim and hitting her until she said they had not bullied her,

which they recorded. The girl also received threatening text messages and when her parents noticed that she was acting very strangely, took her to the hospital. Whilst in psychiatric care the mothers of the bullies visited and intimidated the victim, and also the researcher. The teacher involved also pressured the victim and researcher to minimise the situation and prevent it reaching the stage of legal litigation.

Sub-theme: Role of police

Another way in which bullying was tackled in South Korea was through the involvement of the police. Police officers would be assigned to schools, and may give talks warning pupils not to bully others. Bullying could also be reported to the police, and it was seemingly law that the police had to become involved if an incident was not resolved within 30 days. In practice, the role that the police force played was not viewed as effective by interviewees.

One researcher particularly identified the problem that the officers assigned to schools were female which, from the researcher's perspective, meant that the officers did not garner much respect within Korean society.

I see the underlying logic about assigning female officers to schools. But how it is, they are not, not as well respected. That is, among teachers at schools, and from that way they are not informed of incidents if there is any. Also even if they are informed then their official actions do not be considered serious. – Researcher One

One teacher felt that the talks such officers might give to pupils were not effective in preventing bullying because they took the form of warnings, rather than education. Overall there was a feeling that although the police had the power to sue students who had committed bullying or other types of school violence, this rarely happened. These powers appeared intended as a deterrent only.

Another reason that the role of the police in this area may be ineffective is that schools might not want to contact the police, as this could damage the school's image.

In general situations it's not very common, but people have right to call the policemen. First, the school itself, second the teacher and third the victim who is being bullied. And the first two, that is school and teachers, normally do not call the policemen because of the school image. They need to sort of protect the school image. – High School Teacher Two

If a case of bullying did reach the point where police were involved, this could mean that the parents of the victim sued the bullies and legal litigation ensued. Throughout the interviews consequences of such legal litigation were unclear. Upon asking one researcher it was suggested that there were no serious consequences. Instead it usually led to the case being settled without full litigation.

Nothing really, serious consequences. You know, so Koreans are very [INAUDIBLE], then they see a little child get into legal problems so then the parents feel bad. The parents of the victim feel very bad about it. So they back down, something like that. Or they settle. I don't think the legal situation, the legal litigation, is the best way to do it. You know it just turns out that the predicament has now gone away. Usually it settles down before, without really getting to that. For, I think for the girls who did the videotaping and put it on the website, actually they went through the legal litigation and I think it's probation, something like that. They didn't get anything really serious. – Researcher Two

Major theme 2: Collectivist values

There were several themes which emerged relating to the importance of the community, which I felt were best summarised as collectivist values. In collectivist societies, greater value is placed upon the interests of the group(s) one belongs to, rather than individual interests (Oysermann, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In cross-cultural studies, South Korea is typically considered one of the most collectivist nations and also has a strong Confucian heritage (e.g. Miyahara, Kim, Sin & Yoon, 1998; Park & Chesla, 2007). Confucianism summarises the values emphasised by the teachings of Confucius, an ancient Chinese philosopher, where family cohesion and community harmony are important (Park & Chesla, 2007). Although it may share similar values with some religions, Confucianism is not a religious faith but rather a set of ideals which have traditionally held strong influence within some cultures. The nature of collectivist values and societies, in contrast with individualistic ones, is discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.

Bullying clearly was not seen as an issue purely for victims and bullies to deal with, or for the school alone to deal with. Parents and other community members were seen as important people in terms of tackling bullying. A lot of organisations were identified as being involved in anti-bullying work and there was a sense that bullying was viewed as a problem by society in general.

Following the high-profile cases of bullying-related suicide, there was a large media and public outcry calling for action to be taken.

Yes it is definitely seen as a serious problem. A big thing happened in the 1980s in Japan to do with ijime. Then in the late 1990s a similar accident happened in Korea that started interest in bullying. – Education Office Member

One teacher interviewed suggested that around this time there was a movement meaning 'the destruction of the classroom', where people stopped trusting the classroom because of teachers' use of violence. It seems that anti-bullying work largely emerged because of such attention on the issue of violence in schools, showing the power of public attention.

Around late 1990s when Korea experienced IMF, which was an economic crisis, there has been huge crisis regarding bullying, teachers' physical violence, that they used to beat students. It has been a huge attention towards school system so since then the school system has been more trying to avoid bullyings and violence. – High School Teacher One

Interestingly however, all three researchers proposed that there was a pattern in Korean society for an outcry to occur after a shocking incident resulting in action being taken, but for attention to then fall off and for action not to be sustained.

In our country if there is a big accident or suicide because of bullying the government and media, everyone is interested but after that we forget. We don't have any policy, the nation forgets. Nowadays there is no big accident so we are calm. – Researcher Three

This seems to reflect the above researcher's experience that the anti-bullying programmes developed for the government were not sustained.

Sub-theme: Importance of family

Pupils' families were seen as key, both in terms of taking action against bullying and in experiencing the effects of it. Parents might be involved in stopping bullying by the regional office for education, through meetings between the office, teachers and parent representatives, or by being made aware by the class teacher that their child is

involved in bullying. Parents were generally seen as being very concerned for their child's welfare if their child was being victimised. However, one interviewee also expressed the idea that parents did not see bullying as a serious concern if their child was unaffected.

But the problem is, mom think it's not such a problem, it's not so serious. They just think that you know, it isn't the case, it's fine, they can be bullied sometimes, whatever.
– High School Teacher Three

Some teachers interviewed spoke of letting parents know that their child was being bullied. It was thought that parents could play a role in helping their child to change in some way to stop being victimised.

And I think that it's not just the school's problem to take care of the bullying situation. It's also parenting should be, the parents should be sort of active about the problem and try to improve it. – High School Teacher Three

Parents may not see it as their duty to do this though, instead believing that the school should stop the bullying. Participants also spoke of the parents of victims blaming the parents of bullies, who may not perceive that their child has done anything wrong, or of only being concerned about their child's welfare rather than about bullying in general.

Many parents over-protect children. Sometimes this confuses the school – they get angry at other parents and fight with them. But only their child is important, they don't push for general programmes. If their child is victimized they are angry and want to sue the other child. But if their child is not bullied they don't have concern for a general programme. – Researcher Three

One researcher experienced the case of bullying described earlier, where the mothers of the bullies had intimidated the victim and the researcher in an attempt to prevent negative consequences for their children. This participant felt that parents wanted to protect their children but not guide their behaviour, which was what was needed to prevent bullying.

...maybe Korean parents have very wrong ideas about protecting their children, protecting them from some apparent problem. It's not going to be so good. They need to protect their children from going in the wrong direction, but they don't think that way.
– Researcher Two

The representatives from the charity saw a clear role for parents in anti-bullying initiatives. The charity was developing a peer support program involving mothers and reported that there had been a very positive response from mothers so far. Parents had also helped to fund independent experts to work with schools around bullying. One of the interviewees also felt that parents suffered as well as their children when bullying happened, and also needed support afterwards.

The result of the school, a lot of schools do not really realize the pain that results by the school violence and the possible psychological illnesses overall. So there has not been much awareness of that ... So the treatment of those illnesses seems to be very difficult and the other thing is the parents, the family members, seem to sort of share with the pain. – Charity Representative Three

The researcher beginning to develop an anti-bullying intervention programme for schools felt that the above was a good idea, and had considered involving mothers' associations in anti-bullying work.

And usually what we, this is one of the best things about Korea, when you have a good one or two people they have the ability to spread out everything. So have a good one or two mothers who are very into it and they become the leader of this thing and then they will go out everywhere and do this. So that might be a good thing to do. And I'm trying to think about, there are a lot of mothers' associations, Korean Mothers Association, something like that, at the schools. There are a lot of these things so work with them. Probably that's where we will get our support when we start out. – Researcher Two

Sub-theme: Importance of community

Interestingly, the wider community was seen as potentially playing an important role in tackling bullying. Legislation required schools to have a committee that dealt with school violence issues, which seemed to be composed of retired professionals such as retired police officers. The regional office for education bullying plan I accessed

(detailed in Appendix II) involved community members in anti-bullying initiatives. The Learning Spaces pilot programme used a team of retired professionals to ensure schools were safe places and that children knew how to keep themselves safe. In addition the team were supported by a large number of volunteers recruited through local neighbourhood organisations.

The charity for prevention of youth violence included community work in their strategies for approaching bullying. As well as government lobbying they ran campaigns to raise awareness of the issue amongst members of the public.

They make the campaign on every Tuesday at the end of the month in the morning in the metro. [The idea is] that the people should come up with plans for how to act to the school violence. So they make a small campaign. – Charity Representative Three

Effective anti-bullying work was perceived as requiring change throughout society, involving an overall cultural change where adults modelled and encouraged different attitudes.

...the most fundamental change that has to be made is that the home, as well as the school and the society has to change altogether. – Government Officer

...bullying is not just kid's problem, it's everybody's problem. And kids look at adults and we do the bullying all the time on the road, driving, bullying other car, or at home you bully your children or older child bully younger child. Everything. And you do that and you say to your own children not to do it, it's not going to work. So the only way to make it happen is the whole community has a consensus about bullying and not only kids stop doing it but grown-ups stop doing it too. – Researcher Two

Bullying starts in elementary school and cannot be solved by the school or education department. Parenting is involved and the need for moral education in school. That is the most important thing in society – to create a culture where differences are accepted. – Education Office Member

Sub-theme: Emphasis on role of victim

...it is very important to apply the actual law or the administrative approach for the perpetrators not just for victims. The reason is that there is only one victim but there are

many perpetrators. The reason is because schools care so much about their images they come up with, deviate the fact that the perpetrators are the problems, but rather it's usually not the case. – High School Teacher Two

The importance of a harmonious community appeared to be reflected in the very essence of school bullying. A key cause of bullying was portrayed as the victims' differences from their peers. Throughout the interviews there was an overwhelming emphasis on the role of the victim in bullying. Children were seen as becoming involved in perpetrating bullying due to peer relations; groups not individuals instigated the victimisation of a child and others joined in to be more like them. Individual differences on the other hand were seen as key in a child becoming the target of bullying. Being different from your peers seemed to disqualify you from being part of their community.

Some of the teachers interviewed particularly emphasised the need for victims to change, in order to stop being bullied. One approach was for teachers to try to help the victim become more like their peers e.g. through helping them do better academically.

Firstly if the student has some problems with his like health or his figure, you know what I mean, the teacher in a hidden way told the person how to clean up his or her clothes or figure. And then after that the teacher praise the person's difference and the students around him also look at the person in a different way. That is the first case. The second case is if the person is bullied because of bad grades then the teacher usually gives more extra help, but in a hidden way, or they give some questions before the class that she's going to ask the class and the student can think about the answers first. – Elementary School Teacher 2

Transferring schools was reported to be a common outcome for victimised children and although this was at their and their family's instigation it could be supported by teachers and the local office for education. Again, this emphasises stopping bullying by altering the victim's situation.

The only solution the victim has is really leave the state and leave the school because the school administration is not really doing anything about it. And there is no sort of restraining system for perpetrators so the victim's only solution is to leave. – High School Teacher Two

That's why teachers recommend the parents of bullying victims, 'why don't you think about moving to another place, why don't you take the kid out of the state..', instead of actually addressing the perpetrators. That's happening I guess. It doesn't lead to extra work. – Researcher One

There was a very strong emphasis also on the provision of counselling for pupils involved in bullying. Although this was for both victims and perpetrators, the emphasis was on supporting victims.

Anti-bullying initiatives did include tackling the perpetrators in some cases, and this was seen as part of tackling bullying by the government.

Plus the ministry is also responsible for counselling perpetrators and victims. For instance for perpetrators it's more about becoming aware of the seriousness of the bullying. – Government Officer

One teacher suggested that when bullying occurred teachers may do work with their class to teach them the importance of diversity.

In other cases the teachers might try to emphasise student diversity for a long time ... If the teacher actively emphasizes diversity and gives out attention, the victim himself or herself can satisfy himself or herself about 20%. – High School Teacher One

Both the member of an Education Office interviewed and the charity representatives saw the importance of trying to educate perpetrators about bullying and its consequences. Other initiatives focused on the role of non-involved pupils. The anti-bullying programmes funded by the government especially centred around the idea of getting pupil bystanders to intervene in bullying.

I think the bystander role is very important. The slogan for [the] anti-bullying campaign was 'We no more bystander, we help victim'. There are lots of bystanders so if get them supporting victims then the victim has a larger group, then others can't bully them. – Researcher Three

Teachers could also try to stop bullying by getting other children not involved in the situation to support the victim. Overall however, there was a primary focus upon the victim's role in their situation.

Major theme 3: Potential for peer support

Peer support evidently was not widely used in South Korea, but interviewees were largely positive about the aims of such schemes. As has been seen versions of peer support were in use, seemingly with positive effects. However, the potential for using peer support in South Korean schools was considered limited due to barriers perceived by participants.

Sub-theme: Attitudes towards peer support

Interviewees with experience of peer support were all positive about its use and impact. Partnering victims of bullying with other children to provide them with support was felt to be effective, particularly given the social isolation typically involved in *wang-ta*.

I think that it can be very effective because sometimes the victims kill himself or herself because there is no-one to talk to. Neither to teachers or parents, and sometimes if you were to encourage one student to help out, the victim becomes less lonely. – High School Teacher Three

The charity felt that young people really benefited from supporting one another online. One teacher had been involved in a peer listening scheme at high school and felt it was a good experience, especially for the pupils trained as peer supporters.

I believe that it is actually effective for myself as a peer supporter because I really learnt how to listen to other people And I was constantly being trained, it seems like I was becoming better at training, as a peer supporter. And I am assuming that yeah, it may have been at least helpful for the wang-ta himself or herself. – High School Teacher One

Another described a college mentoring system which, whilst not effective in terms of improving academic achievement, appeared to provide a positive source of social support for pupils.

Sometimes mentors sort of talk about how good it is to go to colleges, talk about the personal issues sometimes ... Actually the meaning of the mentorship really is for becoming friends as well as for working as a small group. – High School Teacher Three

Interviewees without experience of peer support also reacted positively to the idea of its use in schools.

So there are not many activities where students, all grades of students can get together, you know, do some activities together so it's a kind of new idea. I think it will be very effective and they will like it. – Elementary School Teacher 1

...I think students aren't going to be a problem actually. You know, if they begin to feel like this is something that they need to do, and especially I'm thinking about the elementary school kids. It'd be pretty at an early age that we'd begin to do this with children. They will think this is a cool thing to do. – Researcher Two

However, as this quote illustrates and as seen below, barriers were perceived.

Yes, the peers are very important. The child is very far away from the teacher. I imagine it is a good program but don't know how to use it in Korea's situation. – Researcher Three

Sub-theme: Barriers

Whilst interviewees were positive about the concept of peer support they often expressed the idea that it would be difficult to implement in South Korean schools. The main barrier identified was the great importance placed upon academic achievement within the national education system.

So the system is very different from UK in Korea. The educational approaches are very different so it's almost like the animal living in the tropical areas, moving that animal to the cold areas... – High School Teacher Two

Although pupils could go to either high school or a vocational school, the vast majority went to high school and then faced a lot of pressure to do well in their college entrance exam. Academic success was perceived as being of the utmost importance

for pupils and their parents, and teachers needed to focus upon this. This meant that the government may not wish to fund peer support, teachers may not wish to divert time away from lessons, and that students may not wish to spend time on peer support instead of their studies.

However my concern is that Korean schools... is such an area where every student cares about the college entrance exam and academic well-being, I am unsure about whether the government would fund the schools to carry out some peer support system ... I am unsure about whether the students themselves would really want to be peer supporters because they really need to care about the college entrance ... And I'm unsure whether or not the parents would support the idea of peer support. Because parents themselves also... In here Korean parents focus on the college entrances, applying to colleges and taking the test, more so than the students themselves. – High School Teacher One

Running peer support outside of school hours would also be problematic, given that students spent a lot of extracurricular time at academic institutions.

They also suggested that having a peer support system within a school would not help solve bullying, as the school would still be trying to conceal that there was a problem.

So my point is that if the peer supporters are only inside the school the problem cannot be solved because the schools are trying to cover the problem. – High School Teacher Two

Another teacher felt that students would also be unlikely to want to become involved in peer support if it was teacher-led; if a teacher wanted other pupils to befriend a victim of bullying they would think that the teacher simply did not understand the situation.

...there were some cases when teachers want to resolve the bullying, so usually teachers protect the victims and then they persuade other students to make the person join in their group. But the students don't like that, the students think the teachers cannot understand the weird situation and the weird character of the victim so they just don't accept or obey the teachers command. – Elementary Teacher Two

Another issue to be considered in running peer support was ensuring that the peer supporters themselves are supported, and not left to deal with serious issues on their own. This was identified by the above teacher, and by the charity, which made sure that professionals were still on hand to provide support on their website, where cyber peer support had developed.

And Korean students really cannot even solve their own problems so as a result sometimes they really cannot counsel other students or support other students. And for the peer interactions sometimes people say that they should not be talking about complicated issues. – High School Teacher Two

For serious cases of course they write out the problems in secret. So there has been space for professionals, secret spaces which are not being publicised. But for the light cases the students think that they can sort of get, get the help from the peers. – Charity Representative Three

Overall, participants identified barriers which would need to be overcome for peer support to be set up and run effectively.

Discussion

This study obtained information on the nature of school bullying in South Korea, and examples of anti-bullying initiatives and peer support practice. Thematic analysis identified three separate major themes, with sub-themes. The theme 'Gap between Policy and Practice' reveals that although bullying was generally seen as a serious concern the anti-bullying initiatives are not as effective as possible. 'Collectivist Values' summarises the way that collectivism appeared to influence attitudes to bullying and anti-bullying/peer support work, with community and family playing central roles. Finally, 'Potential for Peer Support' shows that participants had positive attitudes to peer support and that examples given had some positive effects, but that clear barriers were seen as limiting potential for this kind of practice. These findings are discussed here, and related to findings on the UK and Japan in Chapter Four.

Participants' perceptions of the nature of school bullying in South Korea were in some ways in line with findings from past studies. Social exclusion was indeed considered the main form of bullying behaviour, with victims being isolated by their peers. Physical bullying was also frequently mentioned, though unlike in other studies where verbal taunting was common but not physical violence (e.g. Koo et al., 2008). As

in past studies, victimisation usually involved exclusion by large groups of peers, but here participants suggested the dynamics which may lead to this. A small group of children may initially victimise someone, and gradually more children join in, particularly as this group may be popular. Previous studies have showed links between victimisation and individual characteristics, such as being withdrawn or aggressive (e.g. Shin & Kim, 2008).

My results suggest that any individual differences could be a risk for victimisation if a child was seen as being unlike the group in a negative way or if children were jealous of them. Interestingly, some participants suggested that perpetrators may not intentionally bully the victim, but simply not want to interact with them. Different classes may be more likely to be involved in bullying, indicating that there are different norms or dynamics in classes. These findings point to potential new directions for research on *wang-ta*, or bullying by social exclusion generally – looking at the peer group dynamics involved.

As for school bullying internationally, *wang-ta* was here associated with serious long-term consequences. Both victims and bullies were described as needing psychological support and being at risk of suicide, in line with an earlier study on bullying and suicidal risk (Kim et al., 2005). High-profile suicides have led to bullying becoming a serious topic of public concern. Although I found a lack of studies of anti-bullying interventions reported, a range of anti-bullying initiatives were described by participants. A lot of initiatives were government led, such as legislation pertaining to school violence and bullying, anti-bullying information sent to schools, and the Wee counselling centres. Initiatives were both preventative and reactive, but the thematic analysis indicated that there was a general emphasis on the role of the victim. Systems, such as the various counselling opportunities and possibility for school transfers, appeared to be designed around treating or dealing with the victim. Less emphasis was put on working with the perpetrators to prevent the behaviours recurring, although there was some provision for counselling bullies. This linked to the theme of collectivist values; victims may be bullied due to being different in some way from their peers, rather than fitting into the social group, and so they need to be altered to create group harmony.

A main finding was that there was a gap between policy and practice; anti-bullying work was not as effective as it could be. In particular schools and teachers were under pressure from the government not to have problems with bullying. Instead of leading to bullying prevention however, this led to bullying being ignored or covered up. There was the potential for police to sue perpetrators but schools did not wish to

involve the police, and these powers were rarely used. There was also concern that the government was not consulting real experts on school bullying, leading to flawed policy. Government work seemed to be sporadic rather than sustained; two national campaigns were developed and implemented, but these were short-term and the resources were no longer available.

Some participants suggested that it was in the Korean culture to react strongly and emotionally to a crisis, such as school bullying, but for this not to develop into a long-term response. I suggest that future research could investigate the relationship between anti-bullying initiatives, the type of bullying involved and the national culture. These findings tentatively suggest that cultural values, such as the emphasis on group harmony, could lead to some approaches being less successful. In South Korea, it appeared that approaches involving the family or general community would be more successful.

Another area this study highlights for future research is the use of peer support as an intervention for social exclusion based bullying. One researcher interviewed felt that peer counselling could form part of an effective intervention programme, and teachers reported informally creating peer support between victims and helpful pupils. Where bullying heavily involves isolation from the peer group, peer support is an ideal intervention to reduce victimisation. Peers have the potential to reintegrate a victim back into the wider peer group.

Other examples of peer support were described, including cross-age mentoring, peer listening, peer counselling, cyber support, and the mother-led peer support being developed by the charity for prevention of youth violence. As previously identified, peer support as a concept was not widely known by participants. Peer counselling was referred to by participants, including school counselling classrooms, which are likely to be part of the formal peer counselling system discussed at the start of this chapter. Unfortunately however, no participants were well-placed to provide in-depth information about this practice. Where peer support was reported it appeared to be considered positively, but clear barriers were identified. Similarly to practice points identified for peer support generally (summarised in Chapter One), supervision of peer supporters was identified as important – some participants were concerned about children dealing with serious concerns. The main barrier was perceived lack of time to run peer support, due to the great pressure on staff and students to have academic success. This seemed to reflect the nature of the South Korean education system and the value placed upon academic success in South Korean society.

It cannot be asserted that these findings represent attitudes and practices across South Korean society however. As in the study on Japan, the participant sample was largely dependent upon the contacts of those I was working with. Although participants were from two regions, this was a relatively small-scale study. My inability to access Korean language articles, and reliance upon translators during interviews, further means the whole picture will not have been obtained. However, I think this study works well as a small, exploratory piece highlighting potential areas for research.

Summary

This chapter presented a qualitative study of school bullying, anti-bullying initiatives and peer support use in South Korea. This piece of research was conducted as part of a PMI2 project funded by the British Council, during which I had a placement at Seoul National University. Peer support has been little reported in South Korea whilst school bullying in Korea is an expanding area of research. To explore these areas key informants were identified and interviewed in two areas of South Korea. Interviews were descriptively analysed for information on the nature of bullying, and examples of anti-bullying and peer support use, and thematically analysed for overarching themes. Findings confirmed that *wang-ta* largely involved social exclusion, although physical violence was frequently referred to, and pointed to the importance of peer dynamics and individual differences in victimisation. A range of anti-bullying initiatives were reported, but these were not always as effective as they could be due to a gap between policy and actual practice in schools. A small range of peer support practices were also reported, and participants were often positive about this concept, but barriers were identified that limited the potential for peer support in South Korean schools.

Chapter Four: A Comparison of Peer Support Use in the UK, Japan and South Korea

Introduction

Drawing from the information reviewed in Chapter One, and the findings from the studies presented in Chapters Two and Three, I now compare peer support use in schools in the UK, Japan and South Korea. Peer support in the UK, as in the West more generally, has been studied and written about to a much greater extent than in the two East Asian countries. It is therefore possible to use the existing literature to inform descriptions and consideration of peer support in this country. The recent survey of schools in England by Houlston et al. (2009) particularly provides a comprehensive account of the use of peer support in UK schools.

Three possible reasons peer support use might be expected to differ across nations will be considered: cultural values, the education systems, and the nature of school bullying. I will discuss why each of these might affect peer support use, and consider and compare peer support in the three countries in relation to these areas.

Cultural values

Despite increasing globalisation different countries remain distinct. Advanced, post-industrial, capitalist nations like the UK, Japan and South Korea share many features yet they are seen as Western, the UK, and Eastern, Japan and South Korea. These categories are more than geographical, they are cultural. One way of exploring the ways in which cultures differ is to consider cultural dimensions. As described by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p.23), “a *dimension* is an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures.” In other words, by looking at cultural dimensions, we can in some way quantify how countries differ from each other.

Cultural values, or dimensions, might be expected to have an impact upon peer support systems in schools. At the heart of peer support are supportive peer relationships. Peer relationships are affected by the cultural context directly and indirectly. Peer activities are based upon social norms, and the organisation of social contexts where peer interaction occurs, such as schools, is linked to cultural values and beliefs (Chen, French & Schneider, 2006; Tietjen, 2006). Certain cultures may then be more conducive to peer support activities; the type of help offered will both be adapted to cultural values and help to transmit them.

The work of Geert Hofstede in the 1980s has been hugely influential in this area of study. Hofstede was able to analyse survey data from employees of a large

multinational corporation, and from data covering over 50 countries, drew out several cultural dimensions – areas in which people in these nations faced similar difficulties but resolved them in different ways (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Hofstede's initial work depicted a four-dimensional model of cultural differences, plotted on four dimensions: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Later, a fifth dimension was added: long-term versus short-term orientation. Countries where employees were surveyed were ranked relative to each other based on their scores on each dimension, with each dimension being associated with certain modes of behaviour, values, and norms.

With much greater amounts of data, it would be possible to consider how peer support use links with all of the cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede, but this sort of analysis would be over-reaching the limits of this thesis. Instead, I look predominantly at 'collectivism versus individualism'. I have selected this dimension because it has been invoked extensively in cross-cultural studies and analyses. It is also most relevant to the concept of peer support as it concerns "the relationship between the individual and the group" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.23).

Collectivist societies are those where the groups a person belongs to take precedence over their individual interests. According to Oyserman et al. (2002), "the core element of collectivism is the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals" (p.5), whereas "the core element of individualism is the assumption that individuals are independent of one another" (p.4). Individualist societies make salient the needs and rights of individuals over the groups they may be a part of. Hofstede treated collectivism and individualism as the polar opposites, the book ends of a single cultural dimension along which countries fall at different points. This bipolar approach continues in the literature today, although it has been argued that it would be more useful to see them as distinct worldviews (Oyserman et al., 2002). Nevertheless, there is a wealth of studies which compare participants from 'individualist' countries with those from 'collectivist' countries, or which invoke these categories when trying to account for cross-cultural findings.

In Hofstede's rankings of 74 countries along individualism as a dimension the UK is ranked third most individualist, Japan as joint 33rd-35th and Korea as 63rd (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The three countries I am comparing therefore fall at the top, middle and bottom of this cultural dimension. The UK is not often included in such cross-cultural studies, but that it is one of the world's most individualist countries is little questioned. By contrast, in much cross-cultural work Japan and South Korea, and East Asian countries more generally, are often positioned as being strong examples of

collectivist societies, and compared with countries like the US or Canada which are considered strongly individualist. Japan has particularly been extensively studied as an example of collectivist culture (Bond, 2002).

Evidence suggests though that this dichotic positioning of Eastern and Western countries does not bear out. Several studies have found Japanese people to in fact be very similar to Americans in terms of individualism e.g. in terms of close relationships Americans may not be more independent than Japanese people (Takahashi, Ohara, Antonucci & Akiyama, 2002). A study of American and Japanese children's evaluations of peer exclusion found that the majority of children from both countries judged that it was wrong to exclude another child, and that the context of exclusion had greater effects on the children's judgements than culture (Killen, Crystal & Watanabe, 2002). Further, lower endorsement of collectivist values amongst younger people has been found in a Japanese study (Yamaguchi, 1994, as reported in Hyun, 2001) and in a survey of Korean people living in either South Korea or the US. Hyun (2001) surveyed endorsement of traditional Confucian values in South Korean people aged between 24 and 63; although the mean agreement with Confucian values was moderately high, endorsement was lower amongst younger participants in both groups as well as in those who had greater contact with Western ideas. Hyun (2001) argues that the focus upon differences in cultural values has obscured ways in which Eastern countries are being changed by exposure to Western cultures, and by their rapid industrialisation and modernisation.

Moreover, this bipolar conception of individualism and collectivism appears particularly inadequate when looking at differences between similar cultures, such as within Asian countries (Takahashi et al., 2002). For example, in a study of school pupils' judgements about peer exclusion, results for Japanese and US children were more similar than for Japanese and South Korean children – it would be difficult to explain this adequately in terms of individualism and collectivism only (Park, Killen, Crystal & Watanabe, 2003). A study of self-construal amongst adults in Australia, the US, Hawaii, Japan and South Korea, found that the South Korean participants were clearly distinguished from Japanese participants by their very high level of relatedness – construing the self as being related with others' selves – but not by their degree of collectivism (Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim et al., 1995). Further, differences have been evidenced in the conflict resolution styles used by Japanese and South Korean undergraduate students; South Korean students placed greater value upon avoiding imposition and being disliked, whereas Japanese students placed more emphasis upon the clarity of the message communicated (Miyahara et al., 1998). The authors of this

study speculate that the influence of the media and Western influences during time spent abroad may have led to the Japanese students developing a less collectivist approach to conflict resolution.

One reason that Japan may be often assumed to be more collectivist than it is in reality, is the Confucian philosophical heritage it shares with Korea and other Asian countries. Confucianism is the term given to traditional values based upon the teachings of Confucius, an ancient Chinese philosopher. The central virtues within Confucianism are: benevolence, integrity, propriety, moral understanding and trust (Park & Chesla, 2007). Whilst Confucianism may share values with religions, it itself is not a religion but rather a set of ideals which have influenced cultures. It has had, and is considered to continue to have, pervasive influence within East Asian countries, with great emphasis placed upon family cohesion and a harmonious community (Park & Chesla, 2007). Like collectivism, Confucianism considers social relationships to be most important.

Confucianism is perceived as having had the greatest influence in Korea (historically before the divide between North and South Korea) (Miyahara et al., 1998). Yet there is an emerging indication that modern family situations in South Korea no longer fit as well with Confucian family-centredness. One reported effect of industrialisation in South Korea is changed family living patterns, disrupting the extended family system usually found in Korean society (Park & Cho, 1995, as reported in Hyun, 2001). In line with this, a survey of familism in over 500 married women in Seoul found that although family-centredness was apparent, the perceptions of the traditional family concept had weakened (Kim, 2004).

However, it is tempting to some extent to relate the findings of my studies to degrees of individualism or collectivism. In both explorations of peer support in Japan and South Korea, thematic analysis revealed a strong emphasis on community. In Japan, peer support methods often aimed at fostering a harmonious community e.g. the community-approach where all children in a class were given training in peer support skills. Cultural, and particularly collectivist, values also appeared to have an impact upon peer support and other anti-bullying work in South Korea. In Chapter Three, 'collectivist values' emerged as a major theme. I felt this label was the best way to summarise three sub-themes: the importance of family, importance of community, and emphasis on the role of the victim. I will now look at these findings in more depth and consider how well the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism serves as an explanation. A cautious perspective is needed however, taking into consideration the above criticisms of the dichotomous individualism-collectivism approach.

The community approaches described by participants in Japan certainly had a focus upon creating harmonious school or class communities. Having positive social relationships with others was of great importance, and was perceived by some participants as an area where Japanese children now struggle in comparison with children in the past. Unlike in the UK, where peer supporters are usually a specially selected group of young people who may be given badges or hats to make them stand out, often in Japan all children in a class had peer support skills or it was not known who was providing support i.e. in Q&A Handout systems. The peer community, rather than personal distinction for peer supporters, appeared to be at the forefront, which is congruent with both collectivist and Confucian values.

The dimensions identified by Hofstede are associated with particular social norms; it is suggested that within school classes in collectivist societies, harmony and saving face are paramount and conflicts should be avoided (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Despite Japan being in the middle of the individualism-collectivism scale, the nature of Japanese peer support also fits with these norms, particularly in the development of anonymous forms of support which are seen to avoid the shame of having to disclose a personal problem (Toda, 2005).

One of the approaches to peer support in Japan which aimed to foster a positive community within classes was peer mediation. Although peer mediation aims to tackle conflicts and reduce the likelihood of their recurrence, it involves a very direct involvement in confrontation which might not be expected in a collectivist society. It has been suggested that implicit cultural norms influence the ways that people behave during conflicts, with avoidance of direct confrontation identified as a collectivist quality (Miyahara et al., 1998). Whilst the peer mediation systems described by participants in Chapter Two involved training whole classes rather than distinguishing particular students, the use of peer mediation does not fit easily with the image of conflict avoidance in collectivist cultures. The direct, face to face, involvement of both parties in the conflict also doesn't fit well with the idea that Japanese children prefer to save face and avoid the shame of discussing a problem.

One explanation for this disparity may be that Japanese people are not as collectivist in their approach to conflict as might be assumed. As described briefly earlier, Miyahara et al. (1998) presented Japanese and South Korean undergraduate students with conflict scenarios and evaluated their approach to conflict management. They found that the Japanese students were not as collectivist in their approach to conflict as the South Korean participants; South Korean students were concerned with avoiding imposition and being disliked, whereas Japanese students were concerned

with the clarity of the communication. Therefore, as indicated earlier, differences exist amongst East Asian countries and the individualism-collectivism dimension may be too simplistic an explanation.

A different way in which peer support in Japan may be seen as being affected by the cultural context is in the way that teachers running peer support systems may need to negotiate relationships with their superiors. One interviewee expressed gratitude at having a university professor supervise and give advice on how to handle the relationships with his superiors so as to avoid derogation for conducting new practices. This could reflect the finding that Japanese people place greater emphasis upon hierarchical social relationships, a feature linked to Confucianism (Takahashi et al., 2002).

In South Korea community cohesion also emerged as of great importance. Community members were often involved in anti-bullying work in schools and there was an emphasis upon the importance of family involvement also. Family members could have a large involvement when bullying occurred, and the children's charity was developing a form of peer support led by mothers. These findings fit with reports that in East Asian countries, and in Korea in particular, the family is seen as central for society rather than the individual, and a high level of family involvement is typical (Kim, 2004; Park & Chesla, 2007). Schooling in East Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea, has also been seen as highly connected with both family honour and social respect (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992 and White, 1987, as reported in Jeynes, 2008), with high levels of parent-teacher partnerships standard (Jeynes, 2008). Although there has been some suggestion that the changing nature of family arrangements means that South Korean society is moving away from traditional family-centredness (Kim, 2004; Park & Cho, 1995, as reported in Hyun, 2001), my findings do indicate the importance of family.

If in the future use of peer support in South Korea grows, it will be interesting to see whether it places as big an emphasis upon school peer communities as Japanese peer support. If peer support is adapted to the cultural context it would follow that an even greater community angle could be expected in South Korea, as Korea has historically had more Confucian influence and is much lower ranked on Hofstede's individualism dimension than Japan (Miyahara, et al., 1998; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

For the UK it is necessary to consider how the reported features of peer support in schools may reflect the highly individualist nature of society. Unlike in Japan, disclosing a problem to a peer supporter face to face has not been seen as

problematic. This seems to reflect that the problems of loss of face and shame are not evident within the British culture, although it must be noted that they may exist within sub-cultures. Peer support in the UK is generally much more formal than in Japan. Typically, a small group of trained peer supporters will support other pupils in a formal system; pupils in need of support must request it or be referred, and the roles of supporter and supported are clear. Schools surveyed in England often wanted to help target pupils or benefit peer supporters – focusing on individuals' problems or personal development (Houlston et al., 2009). This could be seen as reflecting the importance of the individual in society.

However, it must be acknowledged that schools in the UK also use peer support to benefit the whole school, including to improve school ethos. Such concern for harmonious relationships within schools could be seen to contradict the extreme perception of individualist cultures as being concerned chiefly with the needs of individuals. Yet peer support is by its nature concerned with improving social relationships within a school, and therefore benefiting the whole school community could actually be taken as a central feature of peer support. It could be considered surprising in this light that peer support emerged from more individualist countries such as the US, where the focus is taken to be on the individual, rather than from collectivist societies which are more generally concerned with communities of people. One possible interpretation is that in countries where great value is placed upon community cohesion there has been less need for such formal approaches to promote harmonious school communities. Alternatively, it could indicate that this cultural dimension cannot fully explain differences in peer support use in different countries. Indeed, a study of close relationships in American and Japanese participants found that Americans were no more individualist in their approach to social relationships than Japanese participants (Takahashi et al., 2002).

It is not possible to make any conclusions here regarding the relationship between individualism and the historical emergence of peer support, and it seems that the individualism-collectivism dimension is too simplistic an explanation for the differences that have emerged in peer support use. Rather, the development of peer support is more likely to be linked to a range of factors. In Chapter One the growth of peer support was seen to be connected to the development of pastoral care in schools more generally, which partly arose out of the influence of Christian values. This suggests some interplay between cultural values and education systems, and I will now consider the relationship between peer support use and the national education systems in the UK, Japan and South Korea.

Education systems

Schools are one of the key contexts for children's socialisation, and the transmission of cultural values and norms of behaviour; they are often the primary setting for peer interactions, and cultural values may steer the way that social settings such as schools are set up by government as well as the way they are organised (Chen et al., 2006; Hyun, 2001). The nature of peer support is likely to reflect, and potentially reinforce, the values identified above – with values being passed on from teacher to student, and from peer to peer.

Use of peer support in schools is inextricably linked to a country's education system. Peer support training and activities must be fitted either within or around the school timetable. It may be embedded within the school curriculum, or used to support a school policy or larger goal. For example, schools in the UK may use peer support to help demonstrate they meet the Healthy Schools government initiative (running since 1999, jointly initiated by the then Department for Children, Schools and Family and the Department of Health). The nature of the education system may also influence the type of peer support that can be run, and the ages of the children involved as peer supporters or users.

The basic structure of the education system is fairly similar in the three countries. In the UK, schooling is currently compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16. Before school, children may attend a nursery school or playgroup. Children attend primary school between 5 and 10 years, and then secondary school between ages 11 and 16. Post-16 they may attend a sixth-form within a school or a college, and the present government is proposing that these final two years of education become compulsory. Similarly, in Japan, children may attend kindergarten between the ages of 3 and 5, and schooling is then compulsory from age 6 until 15. Children first attend elementary school until age 12, then junior high school until age 15, and finally high school if they pass an entrance exam. There are also a small number of schools which combine junior high and high school education. In South Korea, children may also attend kindergarten, between 4 and 6. Elementary school begins at age 7 and lasts until age 12, followed by middle school from age 13 to 15. Although education is not compulsory after middle school, 90% of children go on to high school for three years (Koo, 2005). In each nation there are a variety of state schools, private schools and special education schools, and older children may take vocational courses.

Findings from the studies in Chapters Two and Three suggest that aspects of the education system in Japan and South Korea have an impact on peer support use.

A perceived barrier to the potential spread of peer support in South Korea was the difficulty of fitting it in around the high amount of time students spend studying both at school and outside school, at other educational institutes. In Japan, scheduling peer support was also highly problematic. There was little opportunity to run it in class time and it was in competition with club activities outside of school hours. Clearly, peer support was affected by what was considered important within the school system. In South Korea, scope was limited by the importance placed upon academic success, whilst in Japan it was particularly affected by the importance placed upon club activities.

In the UK peer support is also likely to be scheduled outside of the curriculum, in breaks and after-school. However, such great difficulties in scheduling peer support, due to competition with extra-curricular academic work or school clubs, have not emerged in the literature on systems in the UK. A possible explanation for this was actually suggested in the findings on Japan – the greater emphasis placed on social and emotional learning within the UK curriculum. As seen in Chapter One, one reason for the spread of peer support internationally is the recognition of the rights of the child and the need to develop them as citizens. In the UK, this has translated into space in the curriculum e.g. in a statutory citizenship curriculum (DfES, 2003). Pastoral care, the recognition that schools must look after children's welfare, is also considered to have originated in the UK (Hearn et al., 2006, p. 6, as cited in de Jong & Kerr-Roubicek, 2007; Lang, 1983, in Best, 1999). The importance placed upon children's wider welfare and learning means there is a climate of care into which peer support naturally fits.

As identified in Chapter Two, there is however a shift towards a more flexible curriculum in Japan and a call for greater amounts of social and emotional learning. Reforms, which had been in development since the 1990s, were instituted in 2002, sparking a crisis over the likely consequences upon achievement levels. There have been concerns that the Japanese system was moving away from the methods responsible for high achievement, traditional, whole-class teaching of an extensive curriculum, towards *yutori*, low-pressure, child-centred, teaching (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). Tsuneyoshi (2004) describes a series of reforms to the national curriculum in Japan, which emerged out of a perception around the 1970s that young people were being put under intense pressure to perform well academically and pass examinations. Around this time there was great media focus upon problems in schools, including school violence and bullying, which were considered linked to the pressures of university entrance examinations (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). In response, reforms were introduced to ease the pressure on children in schools, including reducing the number of subject

hours in the national curriculum and gradually shortening the length of the school week (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). These changes led up to the reforms implemented in 2002.

Interestingly, in some ways these reforms can be seen to be moving towards a more Western approach to education. The Ministry of Education in Japan has shifted emphasis towards education which recognises individuality, allowing children's individual needs to be met and for them to develop to their own full potential, and which moulds young people who are prepared to be modern citizens (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). This new emphasis is more akin to that found in Western education systems. For example in the past the Japanese focus upon children passing university exams has been contrasted with the American system which has focused more on enabling children to reach their full ability levels (Jeynes, 2007a, as reported in Jeynes, 2008). Indeed, one of the motivators identified behind the reforms is the idea that the Japanese education system can be improved by adopting aspects of Western systems (Goodman, 2003 and Hood, 2003, as reported in Jeynes, 2008).

More broadly, Japan's educational reforms may be seen as moving the education system towards a more individualist approach. The purpose of education in individualist societies has been seen as showing children how to learn and equipping them with the skills they need for modern society, whereas in a collectivist society the purpose is to provide the skills needed to be able to act as a useful group member in society (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The description of individualist education systems fits well with the approach Japan is shifting towards. These reforms therefore support studies showing that Japan is in fact a lot less collectivist than often assumed.

It can be thought ironic that Japan's educational reforms have, to some extent, had Western influences; Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea, have long outperformed other nations in terms of achievement levels in mathematics and science, and Western countries, such as England, were simultaneously attempting to improve standards (Tsuneyoshi, 2004; Jeynes, 2008). However, it has also been recognised that East Asian education systems have historically been influenced by the West, and that moral education programmes were easily assimilated by nations like Japan and Korea because of the pre-existing Confucian philosophy (Jeynes, 2008). The shift is therefore not as dramatic as it may first appear.

Indeed, despite the clear potential such reforms have for increasing opportunities and support for peer support schemes, participants in the study of Japan suggested that they have not yet had significant impact. A greater need for social and emotional learning was perceived by participants, with a nod to the UK as a leader in

this field, and the limited provision for moral education still appeared to make it difficult to run peer support within school hours.

Whilst the reforms were not perceived to have yet opened the door any wider for peer support schemes, it is perhaps notable that the trend towards use of peer support in Japan has occurred around the same time as the reforms. It would be interesting to see whether, as the reforms become embedded over time, they lead to further uptake of peer support in Japanese schools.

Historically, Japan and South Korea have been grouped together, along with other East Asian countries, notably Singapore and Taiwan, which have consistently been amongst the highest achieving countries in terms of educational performance (Tsuneyoshi, 2004; Jeynes, 2008). Like Japan, South Korea's education system has been focused upon university entrance exams with similar whole-class instruction methods (Sah-Myung, 1983, as reported in Jeynes, 2008). Participants in the study reported in Chapter Three perceived that it would be difficult to implement peer support partly due to the great emphasis placed upon young people's academic performance. It could be that for peer support to be more widely used in South Korea, some similar change in emphasis would need to occur in the South Korean education system, although that is not to suggest that consideration is not already given to pupils' general well-being.

Overall, it seems likely that the higher extent of peer support use in the UK, compared with Japan and South Korea, is partly linked with the stronger emphasis on pupils' wider needs formally present in the education system.

Although the educational reforms did not yet appear to have had an impact upon the challenge of developing peer support in Japanese schools, the nature of Japan's education system did seem to have positive influences in other respects. Peer support activities were often cross-school, as well as cross-age, with junior high students particularly supporting elementary students. This reflects close links present between junior high schools and their feeder elementary schools, and shows how the nature of peer support may be tied in with the education system. There were also close links between universities and schools running peer support, such as university students training pupils or acting as supporters, and professors supervising teachers. The limited examples of peer support found in the study of South Korea also included one where college students mentored school students. However, peer support was not evident as a research topic in South Korea, and unsurprisingly no examples of links between universities and schools running peer support were found. In the UK, this supportive link between universities and schools is also not documented, and cross-

school peer support has not been found to be a common system. For example, this was not reported in the survey of schools by Houlston et al. (2009). It appears that there are particularly close links between educational institutes at all levels in Japan, which help foster peer support activities, which were not evident in either the UK or South Korea.

One of the roles that the links between universities and school peer support schemes play in Japan, is to offer the teacher supervision and support. A key theme which emerged in Chapter Two was the need for teachers running peer support activities to receive support themselves. Sometimes university professors acted as supervisors, helping teachers develop the best practice, and another key source of support was JPSA. Teachers typically chose to develop peer support on their own initiative, often beginning in their own class only, and were thus isolated within their school in terms of peer support practice. Clashes could occur with teachers running club activities, although it seemed that other teachers could gradually come to see the value of peer support. In addition, practical support from schools, such as financial support to attend training or being allowed time to attend JPSA events, was variable.

Comparing the three countries, it appears the need for support for practitioners is a common problem. In South Korea, one of the examples of peer support found was a strategy where helpful pupils were asked to befriend victims of bullying. This was conducted through the initiative of some teachers, rather than being a school or wider strategy. The lack of peer support schemes in general, and the subsequent paucity of examples in the study, means it is hard to draw conclusions about support for co-ordinating staff in schools. However, in terms of anti-bullying work overall, it was clear that teachers were placed under great pressure by their school and the nature of government policy, instead of being supported to tackle bullying. As seen in Chapter One some of the practical issues that have been identified in running peer support in the UK, and elsewhere, are the need for support from senior management and other staff, and adequate funding and resources (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Houlston and Smith, 2009; MBF, 2011; Smith & Watson, 2004). It seems this need for sufficient staff support is internationally a crucial factor for effective peer support systems.

What stands out is that the difficulty of the lack of support within schools was alleviated in Japan by support available elsewhere. Although peer support in Japan is at an earlier stage of development than in the UK, there are support mechanisms in place for teachers co-ordinating the schemes. This could be a significant difference; without support in place for the co-ordinators peer support systems may be ineffective and have short life spans. The superior support available in Japan may reflect the way

that practice has evolved in this nation – development of peer support grew out of the observations of an existing school counselling organisation of practices in other countries. JPSA emerged as a new, national body which has been at the forefront of development and which includes university researchers, leading to strong links between universities and schools. This emergence of a national body for peer support especially contrasts with the situation in the UK. In the UK a large number of different organisations are or have been involved in peer support in schools. This includes large charities which have received government funding in the past, such as ChildLine, Beat Bullying and the MBF, and a multitude of smaller organisations. It is tempting to think that the more cohesive approach to supporting schools with peer support in Japan, is reflective of greater community cohesion culturally.

The nature of school bullying: bullying, *ijime* and *wang-ta*

Another difference between nations which could potentially affect peer support is the nature of school bullying. As discussed in Chapter One, bullying takes on differing forms in Western and Eastern countries. In the UK bullying typically involves older children victimising younger children, in small groups, using physical and verbal means (Craig et al., 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 1999). *Ijime* in Japan and *wang-ta* in South Korea predominantly involve social exclusion by peers in the same class, grade or whole school (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002; Koo et al., 2008; Morita et al., 1999). However, in Chapter Three, participants did describe physical and verbal behaviours as sometimes being involved in bullying in South Korea. One reason peer support has become popular internationally is as a means to tackle school bullying. It is logical to think that for peer support to be effective as an anti-bullying intervention, it should be adapted to meet the challenges presented by the type of bullying in a country.

Peer support is indeed used against bullying in the three comparison countries. In the UK, schools cited dealing with bullying amongst whole-school aimed reasons to have peer support (Houlston et al., 2009). There was also a strong emphasis on its use against bullying from the previous government, with £3million in funding given to three leading organisations in 2007 (DCSF, 2007). In South Korea, the examples found in my study included peer support systems to tackle bullying or school violence generally, such as the student pairings method used by teachers, and the mother-led peer support being developed by the children's charity. Peer counselling has also been introduced by the government as an anti-bullying approach. The findings from the Japan study showed that bullying was often one of the issues being dealt with by peer support systems, for example bullying concerns were answered in Q&A Handouts and

there were community approach systems which hoped to reduce conflicts, but was not the main or only aim.

It is clear from the preceding three chapters that peer support systems tackling bullying were not uniform across the UK, Japan and South Korea, or within countries. In the UK peer support is likely to provide support to victims through less formal befriending systems or via more formal face to face peer counselling. The focus here is on the individual victim rather than the bully or the wider school community, although some schemes hope that peer support will create a more positive school climate which will in turn lead to a bullying reduction. This focus on the individual may reflect the more individualistic nature of the predominant British culture.

Interestingly, both bullying and peer support in the UK typically involve older children focusing on younger children. This means that pupils experiencing bullying may well be expected to request support from pupils, who are in the same school years as the children bullying them. A disadvantage to involving peer supporters in the same school year as the bullies may be that victims are more hesitant to approach them for fear they will also act in this way, or will tell the bullies. Involving older pupils in the provision of peer support gives a more direct opportunity for the perpetrators of bullying to be influenced. However, unless perpetrators are involved as peer supporters themselves, or action is taken by staff as a consequence of disclosure to a peer supporter, it is unlikely the bullies' behaviour will change. Overall, therefore it appears that peer support systems in the UK may not generally be set up to fit well with the nature of bullying in that country.

In contrast, in Japan one to one peer counselling was viewed by some interviewees in my study as dangerous and was reportedly not in common use. The main concern was that a young person would be dealing with a serious situation and a serious problem would occur. Such concerns regarding confidentiality and support for peer supporters have also been identified in literature on systems in the UK and elsewhere (e.g. Baginsky, 2004). Anonymous forms of advice giving are seen as more suited to the Japanese culture, overcoming the barrier of an individual's sense of shame and loss of face when admitting a problem (Toda, 2005). Social exclusion places a child outside the social group and, given the importance of group belonging in Japan, thus may involve shame and humiliation. Therefore Q&A Handout approaches do seem to be a unique form of peer support that is well-adapted to the nature of Japanese bullying.

Interestingly forms of peer support which offer anonymity and target bullying are also found in the UK, e.g. in the online aspect of Beat Bullying's CyberMentors

programme (Beat Bullying, n.d.). Children are also able to support one another online with issues including bullying on ChildLine's website forum (ChildLine, n.d.). It should be noted therefore that there is a place for more anonymous, non face to face, peer support in the UK as well as in Japan.

Another type of peer support that is suitable for *ijime* is the community-approach. By training all children in a class or grade in peer support skills, a more positive peer group may be fostered – this reduces the risk of social exclusion. Peer mediation training especially makes it more likely that other children will intervene in conflicts before they escalate to long-term bullying. This form of peer support is well-suited to address bullying which is perpetrated by classmates; unlike in the UK it directly involves the bullies, or potential bullies. This direct work with the whole peer group is a more direct attempt to foster a harmonious climate than systems in the UK which hope that a formal service will have secondary impact on school climate. For example, peer mediation is used in UK schools but involves special peer mediators rather than the whole class being trained.

The type of physical bullying more common in the UK, and the school violence seen as a problem in South Korea, were not the main concerns reported by interviewees in Japan. Asocial rather than antisocial behaviour was identified as a crucial problem in Japanese schools – especially school refusal. Some peer support aimed to tackle this issue, for example the cross-age 'Japanese type' peer support favoured by the government researcher and systems where junior high students alleviated the anxieties of elementary pupils about transitioning. This illustrates how peer support may be used to target specific issues surrounding school pupils in a particular national context.

Peer support examples seen in South Korea also more directly involved the peers who would be involved in committing the bullying, for example the student pairing approach partners the victim with a helpful child who is asked to befriend them and reintegrate them into the class community. Peer counselling classes in South Korean schools are very similar to the face to face listening approach that may be used in the UK. However, the idea of 'classes' implies more of a community feel to the peer support, situating it within a group of peers. This anti-bullying method shares the disadvantage that the peer support is unlikely to involve children directly involved in bullying, and thus the emphasis is on the individual victim. In Chapter Three it was seen that there was a general emphasis in anti-bullying work on the role of the victim. Interestingly, in the UK peer support methods also tend to focus upon target individual

pupils – the difference is that in South Korea the reason for focusing upon the victim seems to be to protect the community.

Looking at the bigger picture, although peer support is used for many reasons other than school bullying, it seems likely that the extent of peer support would be related to the overall extent of anti-bullying work in a country. Research on bullying generally has a relatively short history, beginning in the 1970s. Limited early work in the UK began in the 1970s, but research in both the UK and Japan really began in the 1980s. Generally there is a longer history of government anti-bullying work and legislation in the UK, especially if general pastoral care work is taken into consideration. In South Korea anti-bullying work was particularly initiated following the work on *ijime* in Japan. In South Korea the government has run national anti-bullying campaigns, and put into places a lot of measures and legislation. However, it emerged in the findings in Chapter Three that there was a gap between policy and practice. It could be that peer support will take root more extensively in South Korea once anti-bullying work is on firmer ground. For Japan, it is interesting to note that participants in my study never linked peer support with any wider anti-bullying strategies being used. Peer support's evolution seems to have been quite separate from any other anti-bullying work in this country.

Discussion

Overall, it can reasonably be concluded that peer support use is linked to the national context. However, caution must be taken in cultural interpretations of any findings, resisting temptation to overstate cultural explanations for phenomena. Although the findings from my studies in Japan and South Korea do indicate the importance of community in both countries, and of family in particular in South Korea, the individualism-collectivism cultural dimension is not sufficient to account for the full findings. This is in line with past criticisms of explanations of research findings in terms of individualism versus collectivism. Bond (2002, p. 73) goes so far as to describe the 'freeing of our discipline from the intellectual shackles of Hofstede's (1980) intellectual achievement'. Bond recognises that Hofstede's work on cultural dimensions significantly developed our understanding of, and comparison of, cultures, but argues that subsequent researchers have simply accepted individualism and collectivism as a bipolar dimension and lazily relied on slotting countries into these broad categories.

Moreover, as acknowledged by Hofstede, it is a dynamic cultural dimension; a country's degree of individualism is not static. This is perhaps seen in Japan's recent shift towards an educational system with more Western, individualist goals, and as

seen earlier there have been some suggestions that Western influence and the impact of industrialisation and modernisation have affected traditional values in East Asian countries like Japan and South Korea. It was further seen that the bipolar conception of individualism and collectivism is a useful heuristic tool for considering complex cultural differences, but is particularly inadequate when looking at differences between similar cultures, such as within Asian countries (Takahashi et al., 2002).

From my findings on peer support I suggest that it is more helpful to think about the national context rather than broad cultural values. Considering differences in the national education systems and the nature of school bullying proved illuminating and, with relatively small-scale data, conclusions around these comparisons are more valid than claims about general cultural dimensions. Peer support did appear to be affected by the nature of bullying and the education system in different ways in the three countries.

It would be particularly interesting to see the development of peer support schemes explicitly designed to meet the challenges of particular type of bullying e.g. Western and Eastern types. What would researchers and practitioners develop if specifically asked to do this? In reality, the adaptation of peer support around the nature of bullying in a country will be less decisive than might happen if the challenge was explicitly addressed. For example, Japanese practice has been largely influenced to begin with by Western practices which are more likely to be suited to tackle Western types of bullying. It will take time for popular international peer support approaches to be adapted within, and for, unique national contexts

There is definite scope for future research looking at international differences in peer support use, particularly to investigate differences and similarities between groups of individualistic countries and groups of collectivist countries. A survey of peer support use and types in different countries would be a very ambitious undertaking but would be especially valuable. Perhaps a more likely step towards further, and more in-depth, cross-cultural peer support research would be for the development of networks of researchers and leading practitioners from different countries coming together to compare knowledge and best practices.

Summary

This chapter compares the findings from Chapters Two and Three, and what is known about peer support in the UK. It contrasted peer support by considering three reasons why practice in different countries might be expected to differ: cultural values, education systems and the nature of bullying.

It was seen that in South Korea and Japan, a strong sense of community emerged from the data which may be connected to the degree of collectivism/Confucian values in these nations. Peer support practice in Japan also appeared to reflect a cultural emphasis on hierarchical social relationships, whilst in South Korea the importance of the family as a social unit generally was reflected in the themes that emerged on anti-bullying work and peer support. In the UK, considered more individualist, there is a greater emphasis upon individual pupils' problems. However, the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism was too simplistic an explanation of findings.

In terms of national education systems, peer support in Japan and South Korea faced scheduling barriers due to the importance placed upon academic success and extracurricular activities. In Japan another barrier was the lack of space given in the curriculum for social and emotional learning. In the UK however, the longer history of pastoral care and social and emotional learning mean peer support fits well within the education system. A key difference was the amount of support available to teachers, identified as an issue in all three countries, but in Japan the need was met through a national peer support organisation.

Finally, examples of peer support in Japan and South Korea did appear to be well suited to the social exclusion involved in Eastern bullying, through involving victims in the community or fostering a good community. In the UK, peer support focused more on individual victims and actually did not seem well-adapted for the nature of Western bullying.

It was concluded that caution is needed in applying cultural interpretations to findings, but that it seems clear peer support is influenced by the national context and further research could inform deeper understanding.

Chapter Five: Exploratory Investigations of Peer Support in Secondary Schools

Introduction

Following the broad investigation of peer support cross-nationally, I move in this chapter to some exploratory investigations of peer support in UK secondary schools. These were carried out in preparation for two case studies, presented in Chapters Seven and Eight. The case studies shift from the overall view of the use of peer support in different nations, to in-depth investigation of the impact of peer support in two UK secondary schools. This chapter outlines the development and pilot testing of some instruments: a questionnaire intended to survey pupils' knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards the peer support scheme in their school, and a social competence questionnaire intended to be used with peer supporters and matched controls. In addition I provide an investigation of the experiences of pupils acting as peer supporters in a secondary school.

The rationale and aims of these investigations are given, followed by the methodology. This includes a description of the pilot school's peer support scheme and descriptions of each of the instruments being piloted. I then describe the data analysis techniques used, and the findings. Finally these are discussed in terms of implications for the subsequent case studies.

Exploratory investigations of peer support

In this thesis I investigate the impact that peer support has in schools, looking in-depth at issues such as pupil and staff knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards peer support, whether peer support impacts upon school bullying levels and school climate, and what the experience of providing the service is like for peer supporters. This will be accomplished in the case studies through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology, but some initial explorations are presented here.

In order to capture the impact upon the student population in general, large-scale surveys appeared most useful, and in line with what has been done in previous peer support case studies. A questionnaire for pupils about their peer support scheme was needed and its development is described below.

To explore the experiences of peer supporters a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures were desired, to allow in-depth analyses backed up by measured effects. A questionnaire to survey social competence was developed and piloted, with the aim of being used with peer supporters and matched controls. A small-scale

qualitative study of the experiences of peer supporters was also held, allowing development of questions that could possibly be used in the case studies and an initial exploration of this area.

Pupil Peer Support questionnaire

I based this questionnaire upon a previous pupil questionnaire developed by Smith and Watson (2004) for their evaluation of the CHIPS programme. Smith and Watson (2004) used questionnaires to survey pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme in their school, with different versions for primary and secondary schools. For this thesis the secondary school version was modified, with the intent to survey pupils' knowledge of, use of, and attitudes towards their school's peer support scheme.

To allow more in-depth exploration of pupils' knowledge of their peer support scheme some questions were added: what they think the aims of the scheme are, how they have heard about the scheme, if they know who some of the peer supporters are and what kind of issues they think pupils can go to the scheme about. Items on pupils' use of peer support and involvement in the scheme remain the same, although questions on the CHIPS publications for schools, CHIPS Chat, were removed.

Given that this questionnaire had been recently developed, used in one previous study only, and had been modified for use in the present thesis, it was considered necessary to ensure it was appropriate for pupils in the case studies.

Social Competence questionnaire

As seen in Chapter One there is evidence that peer support has a positive impact upon school climate and pupils, and that the pupils acting as peer supporters play a valuable role in the school community. Peer supporters have been found to benefit through their role in terms of social skills development. The evidence for this is largely qualitative, based upon self-reports from peer supporters and observations of school staff. Further, reported benefits from training include social, interpersonal and communication skills (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie et al., 2002). In addition however, they have been found to gain on measures of empathy, pro-social behaviour, self-efficacy, problem-solving ability and social self-esteem (reported by Cowie & Smith, 2010). To provide a full study of the impact of peer support therefore, it is essential to take into account the gains in social development peer supporters may make. I decided to do this by looking at whether peer supporters develop higher social competence as a result of their involvement in peer support.

Social competence can mean many things, all essentially linked to how well a person relates to others. It may be conceived of as an organisational construct, reflecting a person's ability to integrate the different skills needed for positive social and developmental outcomes (Bierman & Welsh, 2000). It is not possible to measure social competence in its entirety, but different aspects/skills can be surveyed with different instruments.

I was interested in using scientifically validated measures, in order to promote reliability of findings. A small number of past studies have measured aspects related to social competence using various standardised instruments. Houlston and Smith (2009) measured social self-esteem in peer supporters in a UK secondary school using items from an emotional behaviour questionnaire (Clarbour & Rodger, 2004, as cited in Houlston & Smith, 2009), social skills using an instrument designed to measure general social skills (Fox & Boulton, 2005), and shame management with bullying scenarios from the management of shame state shame acknowledgement and shame displacement scale (Ahmed, Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1996, as cited in Houlston & Smith, 2009). In a study of peer listening in a secondary school in Saudi Arabia (Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999) satisfaction or dissatisfaction was measured with an Arabic version of the UCLA loneliness scale (Russell, Kao & Cutrona, 1987, as cited in Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999), and aspects of social support with an Arabic version of the Social Provision Scale (Russell and Cutrona, 1984, as cited in Abu-Rasain & Williams, 1999). Two studies of the US Mediator Mentors system (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003; Lane-Garon et al., 2005) measured social-cognitive dispositional tendency using scales from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980, as cited in Lane-Garon et al., 2005). Finally, an Australian evaluation of peer support measured aspects of self concept using a short form of the Self Description Questionnaire II (Marsh, 1990, as cited in Ellis, 2004), general life effectiveness using a revised version of the Review of Personal Effectiveness scale (Richards & Neill, 2000, as cited in Ellis, 2004), and coping strategies using a short form of the Coping Strategy Indicator (Amirkhan, 1990, as cited in Ellis, 2004).

It can be seen that instruments have been used to evaluate the impact of acting as a peer supporter upon a range of areas related to pupils' social competence. However, these areas are very specific and/or not reflective of the more general social and interpersonal skills development reported by peer supporters within qualitative findings. Rather than replicate the areas examined in a particular past study, for this thesis I decided to survey general social skills and social psychological development. I also decided to survey self-esteem, given that peer supporters have frequently

reported benefits related to this. Studies have shown perceptions of increases in self-esteem, self-confidence, or feeling better about themselves (Cowie, 1998; Cowie et al., 2002; Ellis, 2004; Smith & Watson, 2004; Petersen & Rigby, 1999).

The measure developed by Fox and Boulton (2005) was chosen to survey general social skills, as it was designed to survey a wide range of social skills in young people. However it was felt necessary to pilot this scale as it had only recently been developed and reported in one published study only, to investigate social skills problems of bullying victims. I was also aware at the time of planning the case studies that it had been used in the study of peer support by Houlston and Smith (2009) though the findings were not yet available.

A measure of general social psychological development was not identified from previous peer support studies, and so the Peer Problems and Prosocial scales (self-report form) from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman, 1997) were chosen. These scales were suitable because the SDQ has been shown to be reliable in multiple studies with adolescents (e.g. Ruchkin et al., 2008; Van Roy, Veenstra & Clench-Aas, 2008) and these scales particularly survey areas of development linked to interactions with peers. From a pragmatic perspective the SDQ was also freely available and the scales contained a small number of items, helping keep the overall length of the questionnaire easy to complete in a short space of time. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) was selected to survey self-esteem. As with the SDQ, this scale offered the advantages of being shown to be reliable in multiple studies, including with adolescents. (Whiteside-Mansell & Corwyn, 2003; Zimprich, Perren & Hornung, 2005). It was also freely available and contained a short number of items.

All measures were included in the pilot version of the Social Competence questionnaire, to check whether pupils found it easy to complete a questionnaire containing multiple different instruments.

Exploratory study of the experience of being a peer supporter

Another way of investigating the impact of peer supporters' involvement is through qualitative exploration. Qualitative studies involving interviews with peer supporters have centred around the perceived usefulness of any training received, and perceived benefits for themselves and for the school. General benefits gained through experience within the role include: increased self confidence, a sense of responsibility, an opportunity to demonstrate that they cared for their peers, and heightened empathy for others (Cowie, 1998; Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Cowie et al., 2002; Naylor & Cowie,

1999). Negative aspects of the role have also been evidenced. Cowie (1998) found that peer supporters reported derision from some of their peers, particularly towards male peer supporters. Cowie and Olafsson (2000) found that the peer supporters in an inner-London school worked in extremely hostile circumstances due to high levels of aggression and insufficient numbers of trained pupils. Cowie et al. (2002) noted that some male peer supporters struggled to combine this supportive role with their masculinity.

The role of peer supporter is clearly a challenging one with both rewards and difficulties. Previous research however is limited to the perceived and measured outcomes of this role, rather than the experience as a whole. There is a lack of in-depth qualitative research addressing how the provision of peer support is actually achieved by peer supporters. As evidenced this is a demanding role and so it seems likely that the experience of providing peer support will be complex.

I felt that in order to know what makes peer support effective and what impact it has upon pupils, it was necessary to understand the experiences of peer supporters. Therefore an initial exploration of the experiences of pupils acting as peer supporters is presented here. In-depth analyses were performed to generate theory and feed into possible areas to explore in the case studies.

A focus group schedule was developed, based upon a semi-structured schedule previously used in group discussions with peer supporters in the CHIPS programme by Smith and Watson (2004). New questions were added about any training in peer support received and perceived attitudes of other people in the school towards the peer support scheme.

Aims of the exploratory investigations

The aims were to:

- pilot a questionnaire to survey pupils' knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards their school's peer support scheme, in terms of ease and suitability of use in later case studies
- pilot a questionnaire to survey peer supporters' social competence, comprising several individual scales, in terms of ease and suitability of use in later case studies
- explore pupils' experiences of being a peer supporter through a focus group, to generate theory and feed into further investigation in later case studies

Methodology

Participants and setting

Participants were pupils in a secondary school in London with a well established peer support scheme. The Education Authority was one of the most deprived in England at the time of the study, coming in the bottom quarter (out of 354 areas) on a ranking of average scores on the Office of National Statistics indices of deprivation. The most recent data prior to this study showed that the proportion of pupils in the Local Authority who achieved five or more A*-C passes at GCSE was lower than the average for the whole of England, 53.7%. The most recent reports from Ofsted showed that the overall effectiveness of the school was good, with over half of pupils achieving five or more A*-C GCSE passes. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds was high, with the number of pupils who spoke English as an additional language above the national average. A high proportion of pupils had learning difficulties or disabilities. The numbers of those eligible for free school meals was not given. The report noted that pupils' personal development was at the core of the school, and that younger pupils felt older pupils looked after them.

The questionnaire to survey pupils' knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards peer support was piloted with nine pupils in year 8 (five males, four females; aged 12 to 13 years) who were randomly selected by the co-ordinator of the school's peer support scheme.

All year 12 pupils involved in peer mentoring were told about the part of the pilot study involving peer supporters, and chose whether or not to participate. The questionnaire to survey social competence was piloted with six pupils in year 12 (two males, four females; aged 16 to 17) who were involved in the school's peer mentoring scheme. These pupils, and an additional male pupil in year 12, participated in the focus group to pilot the schedule. Five of these participants were currently acting as peer mentors within the school, one participant was about to become a peer mentor and one had expressed an interest in this role. Within the current peer mentors there was a range of length of time in the role, ranging from one month to beginning the role in year 7.

Description of peer support scheme

The school runs a peer mentoring scheme, developed in-house. Pupils in year 12 can volunteer to become peer mentors, as part of the school's compulsory Enrichment programme for pupils in this year. However, pupils in any year can also choose to act

as a peer mentor. This involves being paired with at least one pupil (a mentee) in any of the lower years and meeting with them regularly on a one to one basis to offer support.

Instruments

- i) Pupil Peer Support questionnaire: a 17-item self-completion questionnaire, comprising a mix of closed and open questions, designed to survey pupils' knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards their school's peer support scheme. This version included additional items asking for feedback on the questionnaire design. The versions ultimately used in the case studies are shown in Appendices V and VII.
- ii) Social Competence questionnaire: a questionnaire designed to survey social competence, with additional questions to allow participants to give feedback on the questionnaire design. This comprised three separate instruments (the final version of this questionnaire is shown in Appendix III):
 - a. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965): a 10-item questionnaire designed to survey self-esteem. Participants are told the questionnaire is about their general feelings about themselves, and asked to give the response that most closely matches their view on each statement. Answers are given on a four point likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'.
 - b. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997): the self-rated versions of the Peer Problems and Prosocial scales for 11 to 16 year olds were included, comprising ten items. Participants are asked to answer based on 'how things have been for you in the last six months'. Answers are given on a three point likert scale, ranging from 'Certainly True' to 'Not True'.
 - c. Social skills instrument (Fox & Boulton, 2005): a 20-item questionnaire intended to survey social skills in adolescents. Participants are asked to answer based on 'how you feel you have been as a person in the last six months'. Answers are given on a three point likert scale, ranging from 'A lot like me' to 'Not at all like me'.
- iii) Schedule for Peer Supporters Focus Group: a semi-structured focus group schedule, comprising eight open questions, designed to explore the experience of being a peer supporter. This included questions on activities, reasons for becoming a peer supporter, and training received.

Procedure

The Pupil Peer Support questionnaire was administered to participants during one lesson period in a room outside their normal classroom. Once all participants had completed the questionnaire, they were invited to give verbal feedback on the questionnaire.

The Social Competence questionnaire was administered during a free period outside of participants' lessons in the Sixth Form common room. Once all participants had completed the questionnaire they were invited to give verbal feedback.

The focus group was held immediately after the peer mentors completed the Social Competence questionnaire. The schedule opened by asking each participant to introduce themselves and describe what they did in the scheme. The focus group was expected to last 40 minutes but ended after approximately 30 minutes when it was interrupted by the end of a nearby class. A recording of the focus group was made using a digital voice recorder, and then transcribed.

Ethical practice

The study was conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines and was covered by ethical approval obtained from the department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, and the NSPCC. Pupils who completed the questionnaires were informed that their responses would be anonymous and confidential, and that I was interested in what they thought of the questions. Participants in the focus group were informed that their responses would be anonymous and kept confidential, and verbal consent was obtained. I had an enhanced CRB disclosure through ChildLine, which allowed me to conduct research in schools.

Data analysis

Participant responses to the feedback questions in the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire and Social Competence questionnaire were analysed qualitatively to identify key themes.

The transcript of the focus group was analysed in accordance with grounded theory (Pidgeon, 1996; Pidgeon & Henwood, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Willig, 2008). Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology which was developed to enable theory generation; it is intended to enable researchers to derive new theories, which are contextually grounded in the data being analysed (Willig, 2008). This method was selected to enable an open exploration of the experience of being peer supporters

which could feed into the design of the schedule used in the main study. It was necessary to generate theory, areas which could be explored in the later case studies, because the experiences of peer supporters have not been explored in great depth in previous studies.

Since its development, different versions of grounded theory have been proposed. In this study I used the basic principles of the method (e.g. as described by Willig, 2008) and took a reflexive approach, being aware of my own potential presuppositions and biases, and ensuring the categories generated in the analysis were reflected in the data itself.

Full grounded theory analysis involves collecting further data, in order to build upon and enrich the emerging theory e.g. data could be collected from new participants (Willig, 2008). Given that this study was a small pilot study, this version was not possible and instead an abbreviated version was used. Abbreviated grounded theory follows the same principles of data analysis but within the original data only and may be used where constraints prevent the full version being implemented (Willig, 2008).

In accordance with this method, transcripts of participants' responses were initially open coded, using line by line analysis, to break down the data. Coding involved generating descriptive labels for occurrences in the data e.g. for an activity or skill described by a participant. From these labels, low-level categories were derived directly from the data; categories which simply grouped together and described some of the labels e.g. individual skills could be grouped under 'skills' as a category.

Further analysis generated higher-level categories involving more theoretical ideas; categories which were more analytical than the previous low-level ones. Links were then established between these theoretical categories. Finally, a central category was decided upon which best described the data, and which subcategories emerged from.

Findings

Analysis of the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire

All participants found this questionnaire easy to complete; three reported that it was 'very easy' to complete and six that it was 'quite easy'.

Where participants were asked to give feedback on the design of the questionnaire and to identify any individual questions that were difficult it emerged that more information about the school's peer support scheme was required. Two pupils said that more information about the scheme would be helpful and another reported

that question seven, asking what kind of things do you think people can go to the scheme to talk about, was hard to answer.

Analysis of the Social Competence questionnaire

Four participants found this questionnaire 'very easy' to complete, and two reported that it was 'quite easy'. Several participants suggested other questions that could be added, including whether the person has experienced bullying, if they enjoy being a peer supporter and what might make a person become a peer supporter.

When participants were invited to give verbal feedback on the questionnaire it emerged that pupils were uncertain how to respond to some of the statements in part 4, the social skills instrument developed by Fox and Boulton (2005). Statements beginning with 'Looks...' e.g. 'Looks really serious' were particularly problematic, with participants feeling unable to answer for themselves.

Analysis of the focus group on the experience of being a peer supporter

The focus group schedule worked well in terms of opening up discussion around the experience of being peer supporters, in this case peer mentors. The open-ended questions were understood by all participants. However, 30 minutes was insufficient time to cover the entire schedule.

The central category that emerged from the grounded theory analysis of the transcription was that the peer mentors were 'becoming grown ups'. The ways in which this theme influences, and is influenced by, the experience of peer mentoring is schematically depicted in Figure 5.1.

The categories that emerged were: Connection, the sense of connection between the peer mentor and mentee; On Same Level, the way in which peer mentors were perceived as being more like friends than authority figures within the school community; Nurturing Relationship, the care-giving aspect of the peer mentor-mentee relationship; Benefits, the benefits perceived by the peer mentors; Navigating Challenges, the difficulties the peer mentors had to navigate in their role.

Being a young person facilitates a connection between the peer mentor and their mentee, and puts them on the same level as their mentees. However peer mentoring also involved developing a nurturing relationship. It was identified that this relationship, as well as any training received, led to the perceived benefits of peer mentoring. The peer mentors also had to navigate challenges in their role, which fed into the benefits. Altogether these benefits further strengthened the journey into adulthood.

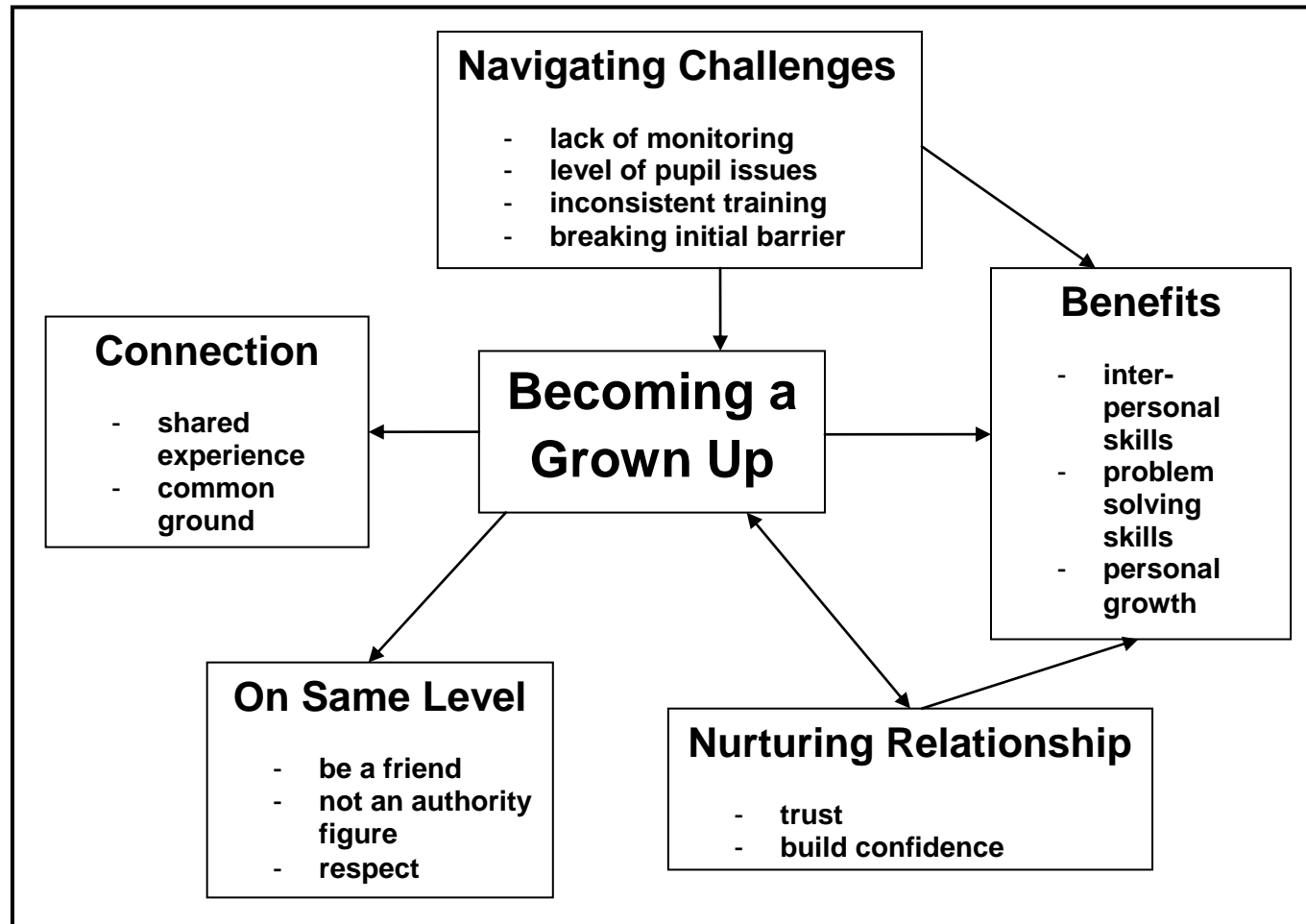
Descriptions of the central category, the categories that produce this and their subcategories are given below. Where quotations are included participant labels are given at the start.

Central category: Becoming a grown up

Peer Mentor Two: Sorry, sorry. You know you just, you just get that, umm, that sort of umm, like you just feel proud because then people can actually say that you're actually a good role model. If you've made a difference in this person's life. And it makes you actually feel like you've actually matured in yourself and you're becoming a proper grown-up.

The core category describes the way in which the peer mentors were adolescents but perceived themselves as maturing into adults. Peer mentors held a unique position within the school community; they were not members of staff yet performed a nurturing role for younger pupils. This category encompasses both the advantages this position afforded in the role of peer mentoring, as well as the ways in which the experience of peer mentoring furthered the transition into adulthood. In the above quote the participant recognises that the peer mentors have a nurturing role towards their mentees, acting as role models and making a difference to their lives, and perceives that this leads to "becoming a proper grown-up".

Figure 5.1: A schematical depiction of the categories identified in the experience of peer mentoring



Category: Connection

Peer Mentor Four: ...And you understand the changes that they go through. Even us, even though they might be slight, you'll understand it more and you can like explain to them what's going to happen and things. And they feel more reassured that they're not going crazy and stuff. So it's, it's easier for them, that's all.

A sense of connection between peer mentors and their mentees emerged within the data. The above quote illustrates that as young people themselves peer mentors had an understanding of the difficulties faced by their mentees, and their significance, and that this connection facilitated the peer mentoring relationship.

Sub-category: Shared experience

Peer Mentor Four: ...Cause I suppose we all go through the same sort of stages as we go through the years.

Peer Mentor One: We, we've gone through what they've gone through...

The excerpt from the focus group shows two participants acknowledging that they have already gone through the stages of development that their mentees will experience. Other identified forms of shared experience which forged a connection included being mentored themselves and experience of specific issues such as bullying.

Sub-category: Common ground

Peer Mentor Four: ...So you have to sort of find something that you can connect with them with...

Peer Mentor Four: Like whether it be having the same hobbies or anything like that. Just find something that draws you to them.

Peer mentors were able to find common ground with the younger pupils. As the selected quotation illustrates common ground was used to help form a connection to make the peer mentoring relationship easier. Specific things cited were favourite subjects at school and a popular card game.

Category: On same level

Peer Mentor Four: Mmm, I think with mentees you have to, as soon as you meet them you have to bring yourself to their level. Because if they see you as like an authoritative figure...

Peer Mentor Four: ...they don't like it because it's like you're another teacher to them.

Peer Mentor Five: Mmm

Peer Mentor Four: Or she's older, I don't want to talk to her. So you have to sort of find something that you can connect with them with.

This category describes the way in which peer mentors are perceived as being more like friends than authority figures within the school community. The selected extract shows how peer mentoring involved establishing a relationship with mentees that was on a more equal basis. Being young people themselves was crucial, yet the ability to perceive that it was necessary to "bring yourself to their level" demonstrates the maturity of these young people.

Sub-category: Be a friend

Peer Mentor Two: Erm well first I talk about things in general. You know like get to know them as a person, like be their friend.

This was one of the ways identified that peer mentors went about acting on the same level as their mentees. The quote exemplifies the way that peer mentors took time to get to know mentees and develop a friendship in order to facilitate peer mentoring.

Sub-category: Not an authority figure

Peer Mentor Four: Knowing you're in their environment as well, where they feel comfortable. It helps a lot because I don't think, I think with the mentees they don't, a lot of them don't feel comfortable at school at all.

In contrast was the emergent theme of not being an authority figure within the school. In the above quotation a peer mentor talks about the mentees being uncomfortable at school. Because peer mentors were not authority figures younger pupils were more likely to talk to them, and peer mentors were able to uncover the full extent of their issues.

Sub-category: Respect

Peer Mentor Four: I think year 7s respect us more. Because they have respect for you, you have respect for them. And it, it hel...it sort of encourages you to interact with people as well because you're talking to people that are a lot younger than you and that see things differently.

As the selected quote shows this respect was mutual between peer mentors and their mentees, strengthening the effectiveness of the peer mentoring experience.

Category: Nurturing relationship

Peer Mentor Two: ...when you actually just see the looks on their faces and you know like before and then after. And you're like yeah, it actually is all worth it. Cause erm, at first you actually get that impression like well, what, what can I do just talking to them? Even if it's just like on one day a week. And then when you actually see the results of it, it actually does make you feel like a parent.

Despite the categories "Connection" and "On the same level" being closely linked to peer mentors being young people themselves, peer mentoring also involved acting as a sort of care-giver. The quote given above exemplifies how peer mentoring was perceived as making a difference to another person's life and that the relationship was likened to that between a parent and child. This nurturing relationship was identified as stemming from the way in which peer mentors were becoming adults, but also strengthened this transition.

Sub-category: Trust

Peer Mentor Two: Erm I always find that at first they're all sort of closed up but then after that I can get onto talking to them. And then they open up and I can always help with their problems.

A key theme that fed into the "Nurturing Relationship" category was "Trust". As the selected quotation exemplifies peer mentoring involved developing trust within the relationship. Peer mentors used trust to gradually encourage their mentees to open up and be able to talk to them about their problems.

Sub-category: Build confidence

Peer Mentor Three: You let him know that it's okay, it's not their fault and you can help them, they're far more willing to let you help them.

Peer mentors took on a care-giving role through encouraging their charges and reassuring them that they were not to blame for the problems they encountered. In the extract above the participant describes building up their mentees' confidence by reassuring them that they are not at fault and that they can be helped.

Category: Benefits

Peer Mentor Two: ...when you actually just see the looks on their faces and you know like before and then after. And you're like yeah, it actually is all worth it.

As found in previous studies on peer support, peer mentoring was seen by participants as having benefits. The quote above exemplifies how these benefits made the experience feel worthwhile, inspiring pupils to continue with the role. Some of the rewards stemmed from the establishment of the nurturing relationship whilst others stemmed from training and a guidance booklet that some peer mentors had received.

Sub-category: interpersonal skills

Peer Mentor One: ...it gives you like subjects so you have to talk about them. How to introduce yourself. How to interact with like. Always look at them, always contact them. Don't walk away when you're talking to them. Pay attention to them always.

Peer mentoring involved building a relationship with a younger pupil, necessitating interpersonal skills. In the selected quotation one participant describes the social skills learnt from a booklet received on peer mentoring. It also emerged that these skills were refined through the experience of peer mentoring. For example participants described that making eye contact with their mentees could be intimidating in practice.

Sub-category: Problem solving skills

Peer Mentor Seven: I'm mentoring a girl in year 8. And erm, she talks to me. We talk about homework and she's got some bullying problems so I sort it out.

Another benefit was the development of key problem solving skills. The above participant shows how peer mentors needed to have knowledge of a range of issues faced by younger pupils and be able to help resolve them. It emerged that where training in peer mentoring had been received it developed the ability to handle a range of possible scenarios.

Sub-category: Personal growth

Peer Mentor Two: Sorry, sorry. You know you just, you just get that, umm, that sort of umm, like you just feel proud because then people can actually say that you're actually a good role model. If you've made a difference in this person's life. And it makes you actually feel like you've actually matured in yourself...

One of the reasons for getting involved in peer mentoring was the perception that it could make a difference. This benefit was identified as both perceived and real, and strengthened the care-giving relationship. In the extract above a peer mentor describes how making a difference led to a sense of maturing as a person. The sense of parental

pride gained could be seen to feed into “Becoming a Grown Up”, and this extract was used earlier to best represent the central category.

Category: Navigating challenges

Peer Mentor Four: Yeah there's, there's always a deeper reason because like to have behavioural problems, which is most of them do have behavioural problems there's always got to be some sort of reason behind it.

As well as the positive aspects of the role the peer mentors faced a number of challenges, mostly connected with the way in which the programme was run by staff. The peer mentoring programme ran throughout the school years, meaning that pupils could become involved as mentors at any point. However, during sixth-form peer mentoring was one way to fulfil a required Enrichment programme, which encouraged pupils to join the scheme at this point. The way the scheme was run and the training received by mentors appeared to vary depending upon when the pupils became involved. A lack of staff awareness and supervision meant mentors were supporting pupils with issues that could be quite serious without staff realising this, as illustrated above. In addition, despite the connection they developed with their mentees, there was a need to break past an initial barrier in trying to communicate with them. Although the peer mentors were not consciously aware of some of these challenges, it was evident that they had to navigate them and that this in itself necessitated problem solving skills and fed into personal growth.

Sub-category: Lack of monitoring/staff awareness

Peer Mentor Four: But then you have the same problem with some of them aren't comfortable at home. Yeah, a lot, they have a lot of problems at home as well. And they're, they're undercover brothers because when the teachers see something's wrong and they need a mentor, they don't realise that there's a lot to the background of it as well. A lot.

The above quote shows the lack of staff awareness of the reasons mentees required mentoring. It appeared that pupils were referred for mentoring due to behavioural problems, but the peer mentors sometimes uncovered that these were only the surface issues and they had to try to handle much more serious problems. This challenge ties into an apparent lack of staff monitoring. What is noticeably absent from the transcript is talk of staff supervision; the mentors do not give an account of staff checking their progress or offering regular support.

Sub-category: Level of pupil issues

For this sub-category two quotes are provided to exemplify the issue.

1. *Peer Mentor Two: I remember doing a mentoring with a, a student who was going to be com, umm be in year 7, like before he just came and like driven to reception and he was really nervous and everything. And he wasn't sure whether he wanted to come to [SCHOOL NAME] but his parents really wanted him to.*

Peer Mentor Two: So I had to start mentoring him early. So I even had to go down to the primary schools as well and see, see what his life was like there.

2. *Peer Mentor Four: He refused to talk to absolutely everyone. He'd get into fights every single day because people would talk to him. Not very sociable. Bless my little [PUPIL NAME]. Oh my god. He's now in prison.*

Linked to the above challenge of lack of staff awareness and monitoring is the sub-category level of pupil issues. The mentors had to navigate pupil issues, greatly ranging in seriousness and which may not have always been appropriate for them to be involved with. As seen above one mentor who was supporting a pupil transitioning to secondary school not only had to support him at school but was required to visit his primary school; something which seems to be over and above the usual mentoring relationship. Another mentor reported having been asked to mentor a pupil because he had been arrested after running into her house; the head of year suggested that the pupil had a connection to her. It was clear this relationship had been an unusually challenging and involved one, with the mentor involved in getting the pupil to attend school and the pupil having such serious issues that he apparently went to prison.

Sub-category: Inconsistent training

Peer Mentor One: I've worked with the Genesis project from year 7 all the way to year 11. So all through school.

I: Did the rest of you guys have that kind of training or...? No? Did you have any training? You just picked it up?

Peer Mentor Seven: No they just gave you a book to, you know. Made you go and introduce yourself. And they ask for feedback to see if what you're doing is right and stuff like that.

Some mentors were better prepared for their role than others. Those that had become involved in mentoring in their lower school years had received extensive training from an outside organisation, but those that joined later had simply been given a booklet for

guidance. This meant that some mentors had to learn the process on their feet, clearly meaning problem-solving skills were necessary.

Sub-category: Breaking initial barrier

Peer Mentor Three: Like he isn't very talkative at all, he don't really want to talk to me so it's a bit...

I: Yeah

Peer Mentor Three: It's kind of hard trying to get him to talk.

I: Yeah

Peer Mentor Three: But, and then...then with time he's getting more and more talkative so give it another couple of months and I'm sure he'll be talking.

Although the mentors shared a connection with their mentees, several reported initial difficulties in encouraging the pupils to talk with them. Evidently the role could be more challenging in the beginning and the mentors needed to persevere.

Discussion

The findings of the piloting of the instruments are discussed below, in terms of suitability for use in Case Studies One and Two. The findings from the focus group schedule exploring the experience of being a peer supporter, are also more generally discussed.

Pupil Peer Support questionnaire

Pupils reported finding the questionnaire easy to complete. This confirmed that the general questionnaire design and types of questions are suitable for use with pupils in secondary schools with a peer support scheme. However pupils gave verbal feedback that they would have liked some information about the school's peer support scheme in the questionnaire, to make some questions about it easier to answer. This information had not been added to the questionnaire, as it was felt that it would influence participants' answers rather than reflect their true levels of awareness and knowledge of the scheme.

Overall it was decided that the general design of the questionnaire and types of questions were suitable for use in the case studies. However, a very brief description of the work of a peer support scheme was added to the final version of the questionnaire: 'where pupils will help other pupils at school'. The future tense was necessary in the version of the questionnaire used at time one in the case studies. Small differences between the questionnaires used in the two case studies were necessary due to the

different school contexts. The final versions of the questionnaire used in the case studies are shown in Appendices V and VII.

Social Competence questionnaire

The pupils in the pilot study found this questionnaire easy to complete, suggesting that all the instruments within the questionnaire are suitable for use with participants of around this age in the case studies.

However, some pupils reported difficulties answering several items in the Social Skills instrument (Fox and Boulton, 2005). This feedback led me to review the rationale for inclusion of this instrument. Although this instrument is designed to survey social skills in adolescents, in the original study it was specifically intended to look at the association between victimisation and general social skills. Although the instrument was used with both victims and non-victims in their study, upon review the social skills surveyed in the instrument appear bullying-centric. Some of the items were generated by the authors based upon behaviours previously reported to be associated with greater risk of victimisation, and some items were designed to be specific to the bullying situation. For example, item 7 'Fights back when picked on' looks at behaviour specifically in response to being bullied. This means that the items in this scale are not the most appropriate to measure general social competence in adolescents who may be victims, bullies, bully/victims or not involved in bullying.

Therefore the Fox and Boulton (2005) social skills scale was omitted from the final version of this questionnaire, whilst the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) subscales were retained. However, it remained desirable to survey the general social skills of peer supporters and matched controls in the case studies. Given that the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) is a well-established instrument for use with adolescents to measure psychological adjustment (e.g. Ruchkin et al., 2008; Van Roy et al., 2008), I felt it would be sensible to include further subscales from this in the case studies. Whilst this meant fewer questionnaire items surveyed social skills, the items were suitable for all adolescents. Although the Peer Problems and Prosocial scales most explicitly relate to social skills, the Emotional Symptoms and Conduct Problems do relate to behaviours that impact upon successful functioning with others. Therefore the subscales included in the final version of this questionnaire are: Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Peer Problems and Prosocial scales. The Hyperactivity scale was considered unnecessary for the present thesis and was omitted.

Upon reflection I decided that it would be of more value to include a third measure within the Social Competence questionnaire which surveyed a different

aspect of social competence. This would enable me to observe impact of the experience of being a peer supporter upon another domain, yielding more interesting findings. I decided to include a measure to survey conflict resolution skills in the peer supporters and matched controls. Helping other pupils to deal with interpersonal conflicts is part of the peer supporter role – explicitly within peer mediation but also within listening or mentoring approaches. However, whether the experience has measurable impact upon a peer supporter’s ability to resolve their own conflicts has not yet been reported. In the next chapter I present the process whereby I reviewed the literature on conflict resolution skills in adolescents and the existing scales, and then developed a new version of an instrument. This instrument, the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire, was therefore used along with the above two measures within the Social Competence questionnaire in the case studies.

Pupils also said that it would be interesting for the questionnaire to include questions on whether the person has experienced bullying, if they enjoy being a peer supporter and what might make a person become a peer supporter. These issues were however covered in the qualitative work with peer supporters in the case studies, and so were not felt necessary in this questionnaire.

The final version of the Social Competence questionnaire is included in Appendix III, including both the scales identified here and the conflict resolution skills measure developed in Chapter Six.

The experience of being a peer supporter

The focus group schedule was successful in opening up discussion amongst pupils around the intended theme of the experience of delivering peer support. In the case studies therefore, similar open questions were used in focus groups with peer supporters, although the wording of these depended upon the type of peer support used in the individual schools, and the different study time points.

The experience of providing peer support for these participants centred around the theme ‘Becoming a Grown Up’, encompassing the way in which the peer mentors were young people but maturing into adults. This transitional stage in their development was seen to inform, and be affected by, the experience of peer mentoring; it provided for a connection between peer mentors and mentees, enabled them to be on the same level and to develop a nurturing relationship, which led to benefits and strengthened their development into a grown up. Having to navigate challenges of the role also necessitated problem-solving skills, feeding into the benefits of their work.

Overall the theory generated within this study appears to reflect and give shape to the reasons peer support is generally thought to be effective. At the heart of peer

support is the idea that young people may be more likely to talk to someone closer to their own age than a distant figure of authority. The findings of this study suggest that it is not only the fact that peer supporters are closer in age that makes other pupils more likely to talk to them, it is the experiences they share and the ease of finding common ground that enable a connection. Furthermore peer supporters can be more approachable because they are perceived as on the same level as other pupils within the school community.

The benefits for the peer supporters identified in this study support previous findings that peer supporters gain interpersonal and problem solving skills (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie et al., 2002; Smith & Watson, 2004). However, a new reward, personal growth, emerged within this study. Peer mentors expressed a sense of growing maturity resulting from the nurturing relationship and the awareness that they had made a difference in another person's life. This theme can to some extent be seen as related to previous reports peer supporters perceive that peer support makes a difference within their school (Smith & Watson, 2004), but appears to be unique in that it is related to the core theme of developing into an adult. In fact all of the benefits that emerged were seen to feed back into the central category. Gaining skills and the sense of personal growth strengthened the young people's transition into adulthood, thus further enabling their ability to provide effective peer support through a nurturing relationship.

The findings from this part of the pilot study particularly emphasised the importance of assessing the interpersonal skills of the peer supporters in the main case studies. It also indicated that it might be useful to consider the experience of providing peer support in broad terms of personal growth during qualitative work with peer supporters in the main case studies. However, this aspect of the pilot study's findings is limited as the context of the study must be considered. The type of peer support offered in the school in this study was peer mentoring, where a strong relationship is created between the peer supporter and another pupil. The findings may not transfer to a peer support system in another school.

Summary

This chapter presented the piloting of instruments intended for use in Case Studies One and Two, to survey: pupils' knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards the peer support scheme in their school, social competence in peer supporters, and the experience of being a peer supporter. Background to the selection of the instruments was given, as well as details of the methodology used to pilot them. It was shown that the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire was suitable for later use, with a small adjustment, and that two of the individual measures in the Social Competence

questionnaire could be used. It was decided that it would be valuable to include a measure of conflict resolution skills in this questionnaire, the development of which is presented in Chapter Six. The questions used in the focus group with peer supporters were appropriate for the case studies. In-depth findings from the pilot focus group highlighted the importance of considering the development of interpersonal skills and personal growth peer supporters may experience.

Chapter Six: Development of the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire

Introduction

In Chapter Five it was decided that the Social Skills instrument (Fox & Boulton, 2005) I had intended to use in a Social Competence questionnaire for peer supporters, was not suitable. Instead, I decided it would be better to use a measure of adolescents' conflict resolution skills. This was used in Case Study Two, to survey conflict resolution skills in peer supporters and a matched group of controls.

This chapter presents a study where the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire is developed. A review of the literature pertaining to conflict resolution measures in adolescents is conducted, and then a measure developed based upon existing questionnaires used to measure conflict skills in young people. A pilot study was conducted to verify the validity of the new questionnaire. Findings from the pilot study are presented and discussed in terms of the validity of using this questionnaire in Case Study Two.

Conflicts and conflict resolution in adolescents

Conflicts and conflict resolution are part of our everyday lives. In particular they are inevitable in long-term close interpersonal relationships, where resolving conflict is essential to necessary to maintain friendships (Rose & Asher, 1999; Rubenstein & Feldman, 1993; de Wied, Branje & Meeus, 2007). Children are more likely to be accepted by their peers if they are able to resolve conflicts effectively (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Reflecting this, conflict skills training has become increasingly popular in schools (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006).

Furthermore, conflict plays an important role in our social development. It is considered to positively influence aspects of cognitive, social and psychological development (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006). Successfully resolving conflict requires empathy, the ability to understand how the other party/ies are feeling, and it seems likely that the relationship between empathy and conflict resolution is two-way.

The study of conflict and its resolution is a broad area with a long history. Conflicts can occur in a huge range of contexts: within individuals, between individuals, between or within families, between countries, and between particular groups of people (Strasser & Randolph, 2004). Conflict has been theorised and philosophised about through the ages, but early social psychological work on conflict developed from the 1930s to 1950s. Early empirical social psychology studies looked at cooperation and competition, followed by Games Theory in the 1940s which placed interdependent interests at the centre of conflicts (summarised in Deutsch, 2002). Deutsch (2002)

considers that over the subsequent sixty years methodological and theoretical advances have occurred in the study of conflicts within social psychology. Conflicts and their resolution are often studied within the context of intervention programs, for example mediation and restorative justice approaches represent further domains where conflict resolution has been studied. The history and development of the study of conflicts and conflict resolution is however, beyond the scope of this thesis. This section is concerned with developing a tool to measure the ways in which adolescents resolve conflicts, to be used to partially assess whether peer supporters develop greater social skills in Case Study Two. Therefore only literature relating to conflict resolution in adolescence, and its measurement is considered.

Although conflict management is necessary throughout our lives, it is especially important during adolescence (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Mitchell & Fredrickson, 1997; Reese-Weber, 2000). Adolescents have been shown to report more conflicts, perhaps because they have a wider definition of conflict than younger children (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006). Mid-adolescence in particular has been described as a turbulent stage of development, where young people experience higher levels of aggression, increased peer conformity and place greater importance on peer relationships (as reported in Feldman & Gowen, 1998).

Meta-analytic studies have suggested that conflict tactics develop across childhood and adolescence, moving from greater levels of coercive strategies to greater levels of constructive strategies (Durell Johnson, LaVoie, Eggenburg, Mahoney & Pounds, 2001; Feldman, Fisher, Ransom & Dimiceli, 1995; Laursen, Finkelstein & Betts, 2001; Reese-Weber, 2000). Adolescents who use aggression to attempt to resolve conflicts may be at increased risk of substance abuse, whereas the use of non-aggressive tactics acts as a protective factor (Unger, Sussman & Dent, 2003).

There is mixed evidence on whether conflict resolution tactics differ between male and female adolescents. This could be partly explained by the definitions, measures and methods used to study conflict resolution in different studies. Some studies suggest that girls may use more constructive strategies than boys. For example girls may seek more social support whilst boys rely more on aggression (see Feldman & Gowen, 1998 for a summary). Two studies which compared males and females found that girls used more constructive tactics, including compromise and problem-solving but also withdrawal (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006; de Wied et al., 2007). In a single sex study James and Owens (2004) found that adolescent girls utilised compromise and social support, but also avoidance and obliging, more than overt anger. Rubenstein and Feldman (1993) studied boys only and reported that they used avoidance, attack and compromise tactics, with compromise used most frequently. A study of conflict tactics in dating aggression suggested that females used all forms of

aggression, and significantly more physical aggression than males (Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, O'Leary & Smith Slep, 1999). However a review of abuse and violence in teenage relationships highlights that girls are found to use violence predominantly for self-defence, and are more likely than boys to use violence in response to violence from their partner (Barter, 2009). It is generally proposed by researchers that more research is needed into gender differences in conflict resolution.

In addition some studies have focused on different types of conflicts experienced by adolescents, such as familial conflict, peer conflict and conflict with romantic partners. While some findings, such as the developmental shift towards more constructive resolution tactics, appear to be consistent, caution must be taken when comparing results.

I conclude that further research is needed in the area of conflict resolution tactics in adolescents, to confirm any developmental and gender differences.

Assessment of conflict resolution tactics

Conflict resolution tactics have been surveyed in adolescents in a variety of ways. Methodologies have included observer ratings, sociometric reports, self-report measures and behavioural measures such as role-play and responses to hypothetical scenarios (Koegel, 1992). Different methods can result in different findings; researchers and participants can have different recognition of what constitutes a conflict tactic e.g. observers suggest coercion is frequently used whereas self-report indicates that negotiation is more common (Laursen et al., 2001). Difficulties have been reported across methodologies.

For example, one study showed that when participants are shown successive presentations of hypothetical scenarios, their reports of using assertive conflict tactics increases across the study (Durell Johnson et al., 2001). This suggests that levels of aggressive tactics may be inflated in this study paradigm. Sociometric measures, where participants rate one another, and observer ratings where researchers rate participants' use of tactics, are both dependent on the particular context and the observers' interpretation of behaviour. Therefore findings from both methods are unlikely to apply to wider populations (Koegel, 1992).

Use of self-report scales is one of the most common techniques. A variety of different scales have been developed to survey conflict tactics in adolescence, including more general social competence or social skills measures, questionnaires specifically on assertiveness, and measures surveying use of different pre-specified conflict tactics. However self-report scales may have poor validity and do not correlate well with other measures (Koegel, 1992). Given the above difficulties with other methodologies it is though perhaps unsurprising that they do not correlate well.

The most cited measure of conflict tactics is the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by Strauss (1979). This was originally developed to survey the use of reasoning, verbal aggression and violence within familial conflicts, including parent-parent conflicts, parent-child conflicts and sibling-sibling conflicts. These three tactics were theoretically based but acknowledged to be part of a larger toolkit of tactics (Strauss, 1979). The CTS utilised a seven point likert scale for how frequently a tactic was used, and included a 'don't know' option. Since its development it has been used in a large number of studies and adapted for different uses and types of conflict. Strauss (1990) reported that the CTS had been cited in over 200 papers, but acknowledged that there was a body of literature criticising it. The three factor structure had been shown to be consistent across studies, but internal consistency reliability was poor due to the small number of questionnaire items used for each tactic (Strauss, 1990).

The CTS has been used and adapted for studies of conflict strategies in adolescents outside of familial conflicts. Cascardi et al. (1999) assessed the validity of a modified version of the CTS to survey tactics for dating conflict in a large high school sample in the US. They suggest that typically confirmatory factor analysis reveals four factors: reasoning, verbal/psychological aggression, mild physical aggression and severe physical aggression. However they reported a two factor solution for both male and female students: physical aggression and psychological aggression. Unlike with the original CTS no reasoning factor was found.

A number of studies have used questionnaires adapted from the original CTS with adolescents. Descriptions of each of the questionnaires used to develop the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire are given below, followed by a description of how the final questionnaire was developed.

Conflict Tactics Scale (Rands, Levinger & Mellinger, 1981)

Rands et al., (1981) adapted the original CTS to identify patterns of conflict resolution and marital satisfaction in married couples. Although Rands et al. (1981) used their questionnaire to survey marital conflict, this instrument has been used in later studies as the basis for instruments surveying conflict resolution in adolescents. The authors included 15 items on conflict resolution styles. Participants were asked to say how well each item described their husband or wife's behaviour when they had an argument about something that is important to them. Therefore the measure can be considered an observer report rather than self-report. A factor analysis with varimax rotation identified three factors, interpreted as three styles of conflict resolution: the Spouse Attacks, the Spouse Avoids and the Spouse Compromises.

Details of the instrument, along with the other previous instruments, are summarised in Table 6.1, and the items and their factor loadings are shown in Table 6.2.

Conflict Tactics Scale (Feldman & Gowen, 1998)

Feldman and Gowen (1998) developed an instrument based on the adapted CTS designed by Rands et al. (1981). This instrument was used to investigate how young people aged 14 to 19 addressed conflicts in their romantic relationships. It comprised 29 items taken from the questionnaire developed by Rands et al. (1981), plus items on physical violence added from the CTS. Participants were asked to rate “how often you do the following things when you disagree with a romantic partner about something that is important to you”.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation identified six factors: Overt Anger; Violence; Compromise; Avoidance; Distraction; Social Support. The number of items in each scale ranged from two to eight items. Details of the scale are summarised in Table 6.1, and Table 6.2 shows the items and their factor loadings. Correlations amongst factors were below .40 and all except Compromise and Distraction were significantly correlated at the $p < .001$ level.

Feldman and Gowen (1998, p. 702) conclude that “the conflict tactics scores formed six meaningful and statistically distinct composites that had good psychometric properties.”

Conflict Tactics Scale (Unger, Sussman & Dent, 2003)

Unger et al. (2003) used a modified 14 item version of the CTS to look at the relationship between conflict tactics and substance abuse among high-risk adolescents. Participants were in high school, aged between 14 and 21. Participants were asked to think about what they might have done in a conflict with a close friend or family member in the last year, and to answer either yes or no to whether they had used the behaviour described in each item.

An exploratory principal components analysis with promax rotation identified three factors, upon which items loaded $\geq .4$ and where items loaded $< .3$ on other factors. The authors labelled these factors: Physical aggression, Nonphysical aggression and Nonaggression. Details of the instrument are summarised in Table 6.1, and the items are shown in Table 6.2 under the main factor they loaded onto. The three subscales were significantly inter-correlated. Factor loadings and alpha scores for the three subscales were not reported.

Conflict Resolution Instrument (James & Owens, 2004)

James and Owens (2004) developed a questionnaire based upon the CTS and the adaptations by Rands et al. (1981), Feldman and Gowen (1998) and Unger et al. (2003), as well as an adaptation of the CTS used in an unpublished thesis (Charlton, 2001, as cited in James & Owens, 2004). It was designed to survey the frequency with which young people in years 8 to 11 (aged 13 to 16) used the different conflict resolution strategies with their school peers in that year. Participants were students in a single-sex school for girls.

The Conflict Resolution Instrument comprised 28 items to measure six subscales: Overt Anger; Compromise; Social Support; Obliging; Avoidance; Distraction. There were unequal numbers of items in each subscale. The Violence subscale from the original CTS was omitted because the items overlapped with another instrument used in the study. The Obliging subscale was included by Charlton (2001, as cited in James & Owens, 2004) and added here. The authors added new items to the Social Support subscale to improve its reliability: “bring in or try to bring in a friend”, “talk to a friend”, “talk to a parent” and “talk to a teacher”. James and Owens (2004) also added an item to the Distraction subscale, which had been used by Charlton (2001, as cited in James & Owens, 2004): “distract yourself or the other person through entertainment or relaxation”.

The authors did not perform any factor analysis on the questionnaire, instead looking only at gender and school year differences in the use of conflict resolution strategies. The details of the scale are summarized in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 shows the items.

Development of a new conflict resolution assessment tool

It was decided that a self-report scale would be the most appropriate assessment tool for use in this thesis. The conflict resolution tactics measure was intended to form part of a larger questionnaire looking at general social competence in Case Study Two. A self-report scale would also be easier to administer during a school tutor period where time is limited.

As reported above the CTS is the most commonly used measure of conflict tactics and it was decided to use a scale based upon this. Methods of measuring conflict resolution are inevitably based upon different conceptualisations of conflict. The CTS was designed to survey interfamily conflict and the selection of conflict tactics surveyed was based upon three modes of conflict resolution important for testing Strauss’ “catharsis theory” of violence control, and were acknowledged to be part of a much wider set of possible tactics (Strauss, 1979). This puts the impetus to use violence at the centre of the CTS’ definition of conflict. However, the later

questionnaires based upon the CTS described above moved away from this, with less emphasis placed upon use of violence. Within this thesis, conflict is being considered to be any disagreement with another person, although limited to disagreements with other adolescents. As the aim of the instrument in this thesis is to measure adolescents' general conflict resolution skills, a disagreement could take a range of forms e.g. peer conflict, friendship conflict, romantic conflict or sexual conflict.

It is felt that a good range of conflict tactics are surveyed in the later versions of the instrument. However, it was felt that none of the adaptations by Rands et al. (1981), Feldman and Gowen (1998), Unger et al. (2003) and James and Owens (2004) would be entirely suitable. These questionnaires were used to survey conflict resolution tactics in adolescents of similar age ranges to the intended participants in this thesis (approximately aged 14 to 18). This suggests that the form of the questionnaires and complexity of the items are suitable for this group of adolescents. They are also useful as they survey a wider range of conflict tactics than the CTS. However, none of these instruments looked at another form of conflict resolution tactic: persuasion.

Persuasion involves trying to change another person's mind, perhaps bringing them around to your own point of view. It has been defined as "a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom" (O'Keefe, 1990, p.17). When a conflict occurs persuasion may be used to resolve it by altering one party's viewpoint so that it agrees with the other person's, thus eliminating the source of conflict. Tidwell (1994, p.6) has argued that, "all forms of "talking" conflict resolution rely on persuasion as the key tool for success". It can be seen that use of persuasion can be an essential part of successful conflict resolution. In fact mediation, where a third party tries to resolve conflicts between other parties, relies upon persuasion as a conflict resolution tactic (Tidwell, 1994). Whilst use of persuasion in conflicts has not been addressed in an adolescent sample, a study of 5 and 7 year olds showed that children used direct persuasion to try to resolve interpersonal conflict, in all conflict episodes observed by the researchers (Miller, Danaher & Forbes, 1986). This suggests that we learn to use persuasion as a conflict tactic at an early age, and this study aims to investigate whether persuasion is used as much by adolescents. Persuasion may be considered a more constructive version of coercion, and the opposite to obliging.

It was decided therefore to include the six subscales used in the questionnaire developed by James and Owen (2004), plus Violence and Persuasion subscales. This included the Obliging subscale developed by Charlton (2001, as cited in James & Owen, 2004), and the five factors identified by Feldman and Gowen (1998) from their modified version of the CTS: Overt Anger, Compromise, Avoidance, Social Support and Distraction. The Violence subscale came from the Violence factor identified by

Feldman and Gowen (1998). The new Persuasion subscale included one item used in one of the previous studies described above: "Get information to back up my side of things" (used in Unger et al., 2003, nonaggression factor) which was felt to describe behaviour aimed at persuading the other party. The further three items were created specifically for this thesis, to capture persuasive behaviours. Including all seven subscales from the previous papers using the CTS to measure conflict tactics in adolescents was intended to enable the full range of possible tactics to be surveyed.

Unlike in the previous instruments based on the CTS it was decided to include an equal number of items in each subscale. Previous studies aiming to develop parsimonious scales which adequately sample broad concepts have found that four or five item scales have greater test-retest reliability than single item scales (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989; Schriesheim, Hinkin & Podsakoff, 1991). Four items were considered to be sufficient to represent each subscale whilst keeping the questionnaire relatively quick to complete. It was felt that in previous studies the unequal number of subscale items may have contributed to differing alpha scores of reliability. In the measure used by James and Owen (2004) the Social Support and Distraction scales had too few items retained by the analysis to have alpha scores reported. Having an equal number of items for each type of tactic was also intended to ensure that the questionnaire was not unequally weighted towards particular strategies. If there were a disproportionate number of items for one tactic it could appear to participants that this was perceived by the researchers as the most correct form of conflict resolution. To help reduce bias towards particular tactics, the subscale items were also ordered randomly within the questionnaire.

A four point likert scale was selected: 0=Never, 1=Occasionally, 2=Sometimes and 4=Often. Previous research has shown that internal consistency of scales is independent of the number of response options given and that the number of options does not greatly affect the amount of time taken to complete a questionnaire (Matell & Jacoby, 1972). A four point scale was intended, however, to ensure the questionnaire was easy to understand and complete. Unlike in the original CTS a 'Don't know' answer was not included, so that participants' answers would all be weighted on the scale and ensure maximum responses for the individual items. This was in accordance with the later instruments adapted from the CTS.

A full list of the subscales and their items is included in Table 6.2, and the final form of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire is included in Appendix III. A summary of the instrument is also included in 6.1.

Initial study of the questionnaire

Aims

The aims of this study were to:

- pilot the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire developed to measure conflict resolution skills in young people, to be used with peer supporters and matched controls in Case Study Two
- explore age and gender differences in conflict resolution skills in adolescents

Methodology

Pilot

The Coping with Disagreements questionnaire was initially piloted with three participants (two males, one female, ages 16, 17 and 18). Participants completed the questionnaire and then verbally reported how easy it was to complete and if they had understood the questions. All participants completed it within 15 minutes and reported that the questionnaire was easy to complete and understand.

Participants and setting

The questionnaire was given to 172 pupils in years 10, 11 and 12 in three English secondary schools. Schools were recruited through the CHIPS London team. One was in a socio-economically deprived Local Authority in London, coming in the top quarter of Local Authorities (out of 354 areas) on a ranking of average scores on the Office of National Statistics indices of deprivation, and two were in Local Authorities in the South East of England which were amongst the least deprived areas of the country, coming in the bottom quarter. The most recent reports from Ofsted showed that the overall effectiveness of the schools ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. The numbers of participants in each school was: 19, 50 and 103 pupils. There were 69 males, 102 females and one who did not disclose their gender; 110 year 10 pupils, 40 year 11 pupils, 19 year 12 pupils and three who did not disclose their school year. Pupils were aged between 14 and 18 years.

Instruments

Coping with Disagreements questionnaire (Appendix III): a 32-item instrument designed to measure conflict resolution skills in adolescents, comprising eight subscales, each with four items (Overt Anger; Compromise; Avoidance; Social Support; Obliging; Distraction; Violence; Persuasion). Participants are asked to rate how often they have done each behaviour when they had a disagreement with another

young person of around the same age as them, in the last six months. Answers are given on a four point likert scale, ranging from 0=Never to 4=Often.

Procedure

Questionnaires were given by the researcher to pupils during class tutor periods. Up to twenty minutes was given for pupils to complete the questionnaire.

Ethical practice

The study was conducted in accordance with the BPS guidelines and was covered by ethical approval obtained for the main part of the thesis, the two case studies, from the department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, and the NSPCC. I had an enhanced CRB disclosure through ChildLine enabling me to carry out research in schools. Pupils were reassured that their answers would be stored anonymously and confidentially.

Table 6.1: A summary of selected previous conflict resolution instruments, and the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire

	Authors and Instrument				
	Rands, Levinger and Mellinger, 1981: Conflict Tactics Scale	Feldman and Gowen, 1998: Conflict Tactics Scale	Unger, Sussman and Dent, 2003: Conflict Tactics Scale	James and Owens, 2004: Conflict Resolution Instrument	Present Study: Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire
Study Aim	To survey conflict resolution styles in marital couples, as part of a study on fertility decision making	To survey adolescents' conflicts in romantic relationships	To investigate the relationship between conflict tactics and substance abuse amongst high risk adolescents	To survey the conflict resolution tactics used by adolescents with their peers	To survey the conflict resolution tactics used by adolescents with their peers
Country	US	US	US	Australia	England
Sample Size	488 (adults)	631 (ages 14-19)	869 (14-21)	325 (13-15; females only)	165 (14-18)
Scale	4 point likert scale; no don't know option	5 point likert scale; no don't know option	Yes or No	5 point likert scale; no don't know option	4 point likert scale; no don't know option
Factor Analysis	Varimax rotation identified 3 factors:	Varimax rotation identified 6 factors	Promax rotation identified 3 factors	No factor analysis performed	Direct oblimin rotation performed but no conclusive findings
Factors or Subscales and Alpha Scores	Spouse attacks (.751); Spouse avoids (.775); Spouse compromises (.733).	Overt Anger (.84); Violence (.80); Compromise (.74); Avoidance (.67); Support items, inter-correlation .18); Distraction (3 items, inter-correlation .20 to .26)	Physical Aggression; Nonphysical Aggression; Nonaggression. Alpha scores not reported.	Overt Anger (.85); Compromise (.81); Avoidance (.64); Social Support (.72); Distraction (.61); Obliging (.66)	Overt Anger (.412); Violence (.775); Compromise (.697); Avoidance (.565); Social Support (.548); Distraction (.435); Obliging (.707); Persuasion (.428)

Table 6.2: A summary of the items used in the selected previous conflict resolution instruments, and the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire

Authors and Instrument				
Rands, Levinger and Mellinger, 1981: Conflict Tactics Scale	Feldman and Gowen, 1998: Conflict Tactics Scale	Unger, Sussman and Dent, 2003: Conflict Tactics Scale	James and Owens, 2004: Conflict Resolution Instrument	Present Study: Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire
Factors and Factor Loadings	Factors and Factor Loadings	Factors – Factor Loadings not reported	Subscales	Subscales
Spouse attacks	Overt Anger	Physical Aggression	Overt Anger	Overt Anger
He/she does something to hurt my feelings (.75)	Get madder the more I talk (.73)	Hit (or tried to hit) him or her but not with anything	Get angry and yell	Get angry and yell
He/she gets really mad and starts yelling (.68)	Get mad and yell (.68)	Hit (or tried to hit) him or her with something hard	Hurt other person's feelings	Hurt the other person's feelings
He/she gets sarcastic (.67)	Stay mad a long time (.67)	Threw something at my friend or family member	Get sarcastic	Get angry and walk away
The more we talk the madder he/she gets (.63)	Get sarcastic (.63)	Pushed, grabbed, or shoved him or her	Get angry and walk away	Be sarcastic
He/she gets mad and walks out (.63)	Get mad & walk away (.59)	Threatened to hit or throw something at him or her	Make other person feel bad	Violence
He/she takes a long time to get over feeling mad (.45)	Make partner feel bad (.52)	Stomped out of the room	Get angrier the more I talk	Push/shove/grab/hit the other person
Spouse avoids	Hurt partner's feelings (.45)	Argued heatedly but short of yelling	Stay angry a long time	Get mad and throw something
He/she clams up, holds in his/her feelings (.83)	Try to spite partner (.41)	Sulked and/or refused to talk about it	Compromise	Insult or swear at the other person
He/she tries to avoid talking about it (.76)	Violence	Yelled and/or insulted	Try to reason	Get back at them in some way
He/she comes right out and tells me how he/she is feeling (-.72)	Push/shove/grab/hit partner (.84)	Nonphysical Aggression	Listen and try to understand	Compromise
	Get mad and throw something (.82)	Argued heatedly but short of yelling	Try to work out a compromise	Compromise
	Threaten to hit or throw something (.74)	Sulked and/or refused to talk about it	Try to smooth things over	Try to reason with them
	Get back at partner in some way (.50)	Yelled and/or insulted	Avoidance	Listen and try to understand
	Insult or swear at my partner (.60)	Nonaggression	Clam up and hold my feelings inside	Try to work out a compromise
	Compromise		Walk away and discuss later	Try to discuss the issue relatively calmly
	Try to work out a compromise		Get cool and distant / give cold shoulder	Avoidance
				Clam up and hold my feelings

He/she gets cool and distant, gives me the cold shoulder (-.63)	(.73) Try to reason (.73) Listen & try to understand (.71) Try to smooth things over (.67)	Tried to discuss the issue relatively calmly Did discuss the issue relatively calmly Got information to back up my side of things Brought in someone else to help settle things (or tried to)	Try to avoid talking about it Social Support Talk to a brother or sister Bring in or try to bring in a friend Talk to a friend Talk to a parent Bring in or try to bring someone (to help) Talk to a teacher Distraction Try to be funny and make light of it Tell myself it is not important Watch TV or play video games Distract yourself or the other person through entertainment or relaxation Obliging Put the other person's needs first Apologise to other person Give in to what other person wants	inside Walk away and discuss it later Try to avoid talking about it Get cool and distant/Give cold shoulder Social Support Talk to a friend Talk to a parent or another family member Ask someone else to help Talk to a teacher Distraction Try to be funny and make light of it Tell myself it is not important Distract myself or the other person through entertainment or relaxation Obliging Put the other person's needs first Apologise to the other person Give in to what the other person wants Agree with what the other person says
Spouse compromises He/she tries to work out a compromise (.72) He/she tries to smooth things over (.70) He/she tries to reason with me (.65) He/she listens to what I have to say and tries to understand how I really feel (.63) He/she does something to let me know he/she loves me even if we disagree (.59)	Apologize to partner (.55) Come right out and say feelings (.44) Avoidance Clam up and hold my feelings inside (.73) Try to avoid talking about it (.56) Walk away and discuss later (.51) Get cool and distant/cold shoulder (.43) Social Support Talk to a brother or sister (.63) Brought in or tried to bring someone (.39) Distraction Try to be funny and make light (.72) Watch TV or play video games (.61) Tell myself it is not important (.54)	Didn't load onto any factor Threw something (but not at my friend or family member) or smashed something		

Persuasion

Get information to back up my side of things

Use complimentary tactics to win them over

Bring in someone to back up my point of view

Persuade them that I am right

Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 16. Data were screened for incorrectly input answers and for participants who had given the same answer throughout the questionnaire. A total of five participants' data were excluded from analysis, who had given the same answer for 75% or more of the items and where there did not appear to be any meaningful pattern to their responses. This reduced the number of participants to 165. The number of participants from each school became: 18, 50 and 99. There were 66 males, 100 females, one who did not disclose their gender; 106 year 10 pupils, 40 year 11 pupils, 18 year 12 pupils, three who did not disclose their school year.

Participants' responses to the 32 items were coded as: Often - 4; Sometimes - 3; Occasionally - 2; Never - 1. Participants' overall scores out of 16 were calculated for each of the eight questionnaire subscales, excluding participants who had not responded to all four items in a particular subscale. Correlations between the eight subscales were then analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficients, which provides a standardised measure of the strength of the relationship between variables; scores of nought indicate no relationship, whilst scores approaching minus one or one indicate negative or positive correlations. Cronbach's Alpha measures of reliability were also taken for each subscale. Cronbach's Alpha is a reliability coefficient, which can be used to test the internal consistency of a scale, that all items measure the same construct, with scores closer to 1 indicating high reliability.

Mean participant responses on the eight intended subscales were calculated and analysed for significant differences in the use of different coping styles overall, and by school, school year and gender. A cluster analysis was also performed, which looks at whether there are homogenous groups, clusters', of participants according to their scores and could indicate whether certain types of participants use similar conflict resolution tactics.

In addition an exploratory principal components analysis was performed, to determine how items in the questionnaire related to underlying dimensions. I was interested in comparing the factor structure for this newly developed instrument to those found in the studies of the previous questionnaires - as shown in Table 6.1. As in the study by Unger, Sussman, and Dent (2003) I ran a principal components analysis with an oblique rotation, which allows for factors to be related to one another, consistent with findings that conflict tactics can be correlated. However, I used a direct oblimin rotation rather than promax, which is suitable for a small data set.

Factor loadings above .1 were extracted. This analysis identified nine factors, explaining 62.58% of the variance. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was checked, to ensure that factor analysis was appropriate for the data; this was found to

be good at 0.725. The scree plot was scrutinised and indicated a potential three factor solution. A principal components analysis was then run specifying three factors only, and factor loadings above .3 extracted. These three factors explained 37.31% of the variance. Items which did not load .3 or above onto any factor, or which loaded .3 or above onto multiple factors were identified, and the three factor solution analysis was then re-run excluding these items. Correlations between the three factors were then analysed and Cronbach's Alpha measures taken for each factor.

The above steps in the principal components analysis were also conducted separately for male and female participants.

Findings

Analysis of the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire

The results of the principal components analyses did not show anything conclusive and therefore are not reported here.

The Cronbach's Alpha scores were obtained for the eight subscales of the questionnaire, to analyse their internal reliability. The results are shown in Table 6.3 below.

These scores are also included in Table 6.1, where it can be seen that they are relatively low in comparison to the subscales reliability reported in previous studies. The alpha coefficients for the subscales Overt Anger, Distraction and Social Support were particularly low compared with those reported by Feldman and Gowen (1998) and James and Owens (2004). The scores for Violence, Compromise and Avoidance were relatively similar, whereas the score for Obliging was higher than reported by James and Owens (2004). The new Persuasion subscale had a fairly low reliability coefficient of .428.

Correlations between the eight subscales were also analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficients. There were a number of positive and negative correlations between the scales, as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.3: Cronbach's Alpha for the subscales of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire

Subscale	Alpha	Items
Compromise	.697	Try to reason; Listen and try to understand; Try to work out a compromise; Tried to discuss the issue relatively calmly
Overt Anger	.412	Get angry and yell; Hurt other person's feelings; Get angry and walk away; Get sarcastic
Avoidance	.565	Clam up and hold my feelings inside; Walk away and discuss later; Try to avoid talking about it; Get cool and distant/Give cold shoulder
Persuasion	.428	Get information to back up my side of things; Use complimentary tactics to win them over; Bring in someone to back up my point of view; Persuade them that I am right
Distraction	.435	Try to be funny and make light of it; Tell myself it is not important; Distract yourself or the other person through entertainment or relaxation; Watch TV or play video games
Violence	.775	Push/shove/grab/hit person; Get mad and throw something; Insult or swear at person; Get back at them in some way
Obliging	.707	Put the other person's needs first; Apologise to the other person; Give in to what the other person wants; Agree with what other person says
Social Support	.548	Talk to a friend; Talk to a parent or a member of the family; Ask someone else to help; Talk to a teacher

Table 6.4: Correlations between the eight subscales of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire (* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$)

Subscale	Overt Anger	Avoidance	Persuasion	Distraction	Violence	Obliging	Social Support
Compromise	-.420 ***	.125	.161 *	.325 ***	-.451 ***	.617 ***	.233 **
Overt Anger		.083	.306 ***	-.129	.601 ***	-.341 ***	-.029
Avoidance			.044	.368 ***	-.172 *	.207 *	.145
Persuasion				.212 **	.291 ***	.040	.176 *
Distraction					-.140	.286 ***	.173 *
Violence						-.404 ***	-.082
Obliging							.268 **

Analysis of school, school year and gender differences

Participants' mean overall scores out of 16 on the subscales of the questionnaire are displayed in order of highest score in Table 6.5. The cluster analysis did not find any meaningful participant groups, and is not reported here. Trends were analysed by school, to check that there was no effect of the individual school contexts. There was no overall main effect of school, $F = .783$ (274), $p > .05$, and there were no significant differences between schools on any of the individual subscales.

Trends in pupil responses by school year and gender are given below. There was no interaction effect of school year and gender, $F = .261$ (132), $p > .05$.

School year

To analyse trends by school year it was decided to merge data from pupils in years 11 and 12, due to the low numbers of participants in these school years. The combined year 11 and year 12 data were then compared with year 10 responses. The overall means for the subscales, divided by school year, are shown in Table 6.5.

There was no overall main effect of school year, $F = .854$ (132), $p > .05$, and there were no significant differences between pupils on any of the individual subscales.

For both year 10 pupils and the combined group of year 11 and 12 pupils, Compromise and Overt Anger were used most frequently, and Obliging and Social Support used the least. The order of tactics used most often were the same as for the participants overall.

Table 6.5: Scores on the eight subscales of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire for total sample and separately by School Year and Gender

Subscale	Total		School Year				Gender			
			Year 10		Years 11 and 12		Males		Females	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
Compromise	10.79	(2.537)	10.69	(2.392)	10.96	(2.780)	10.84	(2.675)	10.76	(2.459)
Overt Anger	10.09	(2.391)	10.14	(2.107)	10.00	(2.828)	9.66	(2.437)	10.37	(2.333)
Avoidance	9.54	(2.545)	9.69	(2.663)	9.28	(2.332)	8.73	(2.408)	10.06	(2.507)
Persuasion	9.29	(2.171)	9.42	(2.183)	9.06	(2.152)	9.48	(1.926)	9.16	(2.317)
Distraction	9.22	(2.269)	9.42	(2.303)	8.89	(2.190)	9.41	(2.139)	9.10	(2.353)
Violence	8.81	(3.182)	8.94	(3.171)	8.58	(3.219)	9.16	(3.383)	8.59	(3.044)
Obliging	8.62	(2.523)	8.76	(2.428)	8.40	(2.684)	8.36	(2.526)	8.79	(2.520)
Social Support	8.23	(2.260)	8.23	(2.361)	8.23	(2.100)	7.73	(2.533)	8.55	(2.016)

Gender

There was a main effect of gender, $F=3.517$ (132), $p<0.005$. There were significant differences between males and females on the Avoidance subscale, $F=10.048$ (1), $p<.005$, and the Social Support subscale, $F=4.616$ (1), $p<.05$; female students reported using both tactics more frequently.

The overall mean scores, divided by gender, are displayed in Table 6.5. For both male and female students Compromise and Overt Anger were used most frequently, but for males Obliging and Social Support were used the least and for females Violence and Social Support were used the least. The order of the highest mean scores for both genders is largely the same as for the overall group of students. However, for male students Avoidance is the sixth highest score rather than the third, and for females Violence is the seventh highest rather than the sixth.

Discussion

The findings of the pilot of the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire are discussed below, in terms of general instrument reliability, conflict resolution tactics in adolescents, and the suitability of the instrument for use in Case Study Two.

General

This study developed an instrument for surveying conflict resolution tactics used by adolescents in disagreements with other adolescents. It was based upon previous

questionnaires, which were originally drawn from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979). A new subscale was added however, to survey the use of persuasion as a method to resolve conflicts, given that it is the main tool used in conflict mediation.

As can be seen in Table 6.1, the alpha coefficients of the subscales were generally lower than those reported by previous studies. In particular the subscales Overt Anger, Distraction and Social Support were less reliable, whereas Violence, Compromise and Avoidance were fairly comparable, and Obliging was more reliable. The new subscale, Persuasion, had a fairly low alpha score (.428).

These differences could be due to the differences in sample sizes. As shown in Table 6.1, the two studies which reported some of the same subscales (Feldman and Gowen, 1998; James and Owens, 2004) used much larger samples, which is likely to have improved their study reliability. It is concluded that a larger sample size would be necessary to fully test the reliability of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire. To later test the suitability of this instrument for use outside of the present thesis it will be possible to combine the pilot data with that obtained in Case Study Two, yielding a larger sample size from four schools altogether.

It can further be seen in Table 6.2 that the subscales across studies were formed by different numbers of items. In this study four items were included for each subscale of the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire, whereas in the Feldman and Gowen study (1998) different numbers of items loaded onto different factors, and in the James and Owens study (2004) different numbers of items were used across the subscales. For example, the Overt Anger subscale had eight items and seven items respectively in the previous studies; the Social Support subscale had two and six items respectively, and the Distraction subscale three and four items. Interestingly, there was an additional item included on the Obliging subscale in the present study, compared with James and Owens (2004), and greater reliability was found for this compared with the previous study. The inclusion of different numbers of items on the subscales seems likely to partly explain the different reliabilities found in the different studies. Having a small number of items in each subscale was also identified as a possible reason for moderate reliability in the original CTS (Strauss, 1990). It is felt that an even number of items on each subscale, as in the Coping with Disagreements scale, is desirable to ensure that the instrument is not weighted towards particular conflict tactics. However it seems possible that a greater number of items, perhaps five or six, on each subscale would improve their reliability.

As has been seen, the new Persuasion subscale had a low alpha coefficient. However, across the sample this was the fourth most commonly reported tactic. This

suggested that persuasion is a means through which adolescents resolve conflicts with each other. Its omission in previous versions of the questionnaire means that the full spectrum of adolescents' tactics has not been surveyed. Future development of the questionnaire could seek to refine the subscale items, as well as add one or two further items, to improve subscale reliability. Given that persuasion is considered a more positive conflict resolution tactic, compared to anger or violence for example, it is felt that this should be included in the instrument. This would be particularly true if a survey was taken to establish the effectiveness of a conflict resolution training intervention for adolescents. Conflict mediation interventions indeed aim to increase adolescents' use of persuasion.

However, whilst persuasion was a common tactic, the most frequently reported tactic was the use of compromise. This is very encouraging, given that compromise is a constructive method of conflict resolution, used in mediation (Tidwell, 1994). However, the second most common response was overt anger, followed by avoidance and then persuasion. These results do not appear to fully support previous findings that young people adopt more constructive resolution techniques as they develop as adolescents (Feldman et al., 1995; Reese-Weber, 2000; Durell Johnson et al., 2001; Laursen et al., 2001).

This is especially given that no significant differences were found between students in different school years. It would be expected that the older students would report greater use of constructive tactics, but this was not the case. Again, this could be due to the limited sample size, and the subsequent low numbers of participants in each group.

However a gender difference was found. Girls reported significantly higher use of avoidance and social support in response to conflicts with other adolescents. This is in line with previous findings (see review in Feldman and Gowen, 1998; James and Owens, 2004). The results do not though support the suggestion that girls tend to use more constructive strategies than boys (see review in Feldman and Gowen, 1998; Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006; de Wied et al., 2007). In this study girls actually used anger more than boys, although this was not significant, and the use of violence was fairly comparable across genders. One possible explanation for this difference could be cultural differences, with girls in the UK not using constructive tactics as highly. However this explanation is not supported elsewhere in the literature, and it is concluded that further research into gender differences is needed. It would perhaps be useful for future studies to break down different types of conflicts e.g. friendship

conflicts or romantic conflicts, and establish whether this accounts for some of the gender differences.

Overall the findings of this study indicate that the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire is a fairly reliable instrument for surveying conflict resolution tactics in adolescents. Subscale reliability could be improved with additional questionnaire items, and a larger sample would better test the instrument, particularly for differences in school years.

Suitability for use in Case Study Two

It was decided to use the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire in Case Study Two. As previously described, a survey instrument has the practical advantage of ease of administration within a tutorial class period, and the pilot showed that adolescents found this questionnaire easy to understand and complete. Given that previous versions of the questionnaire have been reliably used, it was felt appropriate to use the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire despite the low alphas in the pilot study. The alpha scores of the subscales were relatively low but sufficiently reliable, and are likely to be due to the small sample size.

In particular it was decided to retain the Persuasion subscale for use in Case Study Two. Given that it was reported to be one of the most common resolution tactics used by adolescents, and is traditionally used in conflict mediation, it was felt it would be interesting to compare peer supporters and other students' use of persuasion.

Summary

This chapter presented the development and piloting of a measure of adolescents' conflict resolution skills, for use in Case Study Two. A brief survey of the literature on conflict resolution in adolescence was given, indicating the importance of conflict tactics at this time and that tactics become more sophisticated as young people get older. Evidence on gender differences in young people's use of conflict tactics was unclear. It was decided that a questionnaire would be the most suitable type of measure, and past questionnaires based upon the CTS, which measured conflict tactics in adolescents, were reviewed. A new questionnaire, the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire, which introduced a new Persuasion subscale was developed based on these and piloted. Principal components analysis was inconclusive and the reliability coefficients of the subscales were relatively low, indicating that further development of the questionnaire is needed. However, the questionnaire was easy for pupils to understand and complete, the new Persuasion

subscale was useful, and the questionnaire was considered sufficiently reliable for use in Case Study Two.

Chapter Seven: Case Study One

Introduction

The remainder of this thesis focuses on an in-depth look at the use and impact of peer support in the UK. Although it is clear that peer support has been studied fairly extensively in the UK, it was identified in Chapter One that there remains a need for longitudinal, in-depth work on peer support systems. Past research and literature have shown that peer support can take a long time to become fully embedded within a school, and thus the full impact of the scheme may not be seen for some time. Many case studies of peer support have however been limited in length. I will present two case studies which attempt to help redress this issue. Within the UK, the furthest reaching case studies of peer support were within the Prince's Trust Study (Cowie et al., 2002; Naylor & Cowie, 1999), where schools were followed-up after the original study. My case studies aim to take a closer look at the development of two individual schemes over time. I have followed two peer support schemes in secondary schools from the very beginning of their development, in order to look both at issues which present in setting up and running a system, and the impact it has.

The two schools I worked with used the CHIPS peer support training programme, and were able to access ongoing support from them during the study periods. CHIPS provided one-day training courses for school staff in developing peer support, and one-day training courses for peer supporters. I began working with both schools by attending the peer supporters training day at each school. The two schools were matched as closely as possible in terms of their peer support programme, but were in different regions of England that represented two separate CHIPS catchment areas. This was to ensure I could get a representative sense of the CHIPS service. A summary of the CHIPS service and training for peer supporters is provided in Appendix IV.

In both schools the development of a peer support scheme was instigated by a member of staff working in pastoral care, with the general aim of providing additional support for younger pupils. In both schools a secondary aim identified was to help deal with bullying, but in practice there was little focus on using peer support to achieve this. Therefore neither scheme was focused on specific outcome areas. I was interested in evaluating the impact of peer support in the three main areas of benefit identified in Chapter One i.e. schools in the UK report that they use peer support with three main aims: to benefit peer supporters, to benefit target pupils and to benefit the whole school, including bullying issues and school climate (Houlston et al., 2009). This broad

approach was particularly suitable given the schools' broad ideas of beneficial support and lack of specific testable outcomes particularly targeted by the schools.

This chapter presents Case Study One, and the following chapter presents Case Study Two. The first is an 18-month longitudinal case study in a UK secondary school. I explored the ways in which peer support impacts upon whole school environments and upon pupils (peer supporters, peer support users and non-users), and looked at the ways in which the service developed in the school. I utilised the instruments developed in Chapter Five, as well as other methodology.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology was used to investigate pupil knowledge of, use of and attitudes towards peer support, as well as aspects of peer support impact identified earlier. In this study I have investigated the experiences of peer supporters, using qualitative methods to draw out benefits of their involvement and any difficulties faced. To see the impact upon target pupils I have looked at pupil users' experiences of the scheme and for the whole school, I looked the impact of peer support on school bullying experiences and perceptions of school climate. Based upon the previous mixed findings on peer support and school bullying, I do not expect the level of school bullying to be significantly affected but feel it is important to investigate this area. I have also used observation and interviews with co-ordinating staff to identify practical factors involved in scheme development. The aims and methodology follow, including a description of the peer support service, and then the findings are given and discussed.

Aims and hypotheses

The aims of this case study are to:

- explore the impact of a peer support scheme in a secondary school through a multi-method longitudinal research design
- provide feedback on the fit between training in peer support provided by CHIPS, scheme design and the intended outcomes

Hypotheses

The following open research questions are explored:

- What issues are experienced during scheme development, and how is this supported by the CHIPS training and service?
- Do pupils acting as peer supporters benefit from their experience in this role, specifically in terms of developing social skills?

In addition, it is hypothesized that over the study period:

1. Pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme will increase
2. Pupils' attitudes towards the peer support scheme will become more positive
3. Pupils' use of the peer support scheme will increase
4. Pupils who use the peer support service will receive some benefit from doing this
5. Pupils' experiences of school bullying will not significantly alter
6. Pupils' perceptions of school climate will become more positive

Methodology

Research design

A longitudinal, multi-method assessment of the impact of a peer support scheme in an English secondary school where CHIPS peer support training had taken place. There were four study waves over 18 months, sampling the same points of time in the two school years: February/March 2008, June/July 2008, February/March 2009 and June/July 2009. Observation of training for peer supporters took place prior to wave one, in December 2007.

Setting, peer support scheme design, and participants

Setting

The school was a non-denominational mixed-sex state secondary school in the South East of England. At the time of this study, the school's area was one of the least deprived Local Authorities in the country, coming in the bottom quarter of Local Authorities (out of 354 areas) on a ranking of average scores on the Office of National Statistics indices of deprivation. The most recent data prior to this study showed that more pupils in the Education Authority achieved five or more A*-C passes at GCSE than the average for the whole of England, 53.7%. The most recent Ofsted report graded the overall effectiveness of the school as good, with the percentage of pupils achieving A* - C passes at GCSE level well above the national average. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, and with learning difficulties or disabilities were below the national averages. Most pupils' ethnicity was White British, and the proportion of pupils whose first language was not English was much below the national average.

The most recent Ofsted report included observations which indicated that the school climate was very positive. Pupils' personal development was considered good,

as were relationships between pupils and staff. In particular it was noted that pupils were made to feel safe at school, through the care, guidance and support provided.

There was not a sixth-form so the school ran from years 7 to 11 (ages 11 to 16). Prior to the use of peer support the school had in place an anti-bullying policy and a high level of pastoral care, including a pastoral care team, dedicated to dealing with non-teaching issues such as behaviour and attendance.

Peer support scheme design

The scheme had initially been set up before the start of the study. An assistant head of the school had initiated the idea, and two female staff had become co-ordinators: the head of the pastoral care team and a teaching member of staff. Initially another member of teaching staff had been asked but was reportedly not keen to be involved. However, between waves one and two of the study, the co-ordinator from the teaching staff left the school and was not replaced in this role. A group of peer mentors had been selected and given some in-house training. However, the co-ordinators felt that the scheme had not really taken off and outside input was needed to re-start it.

The school then arranged for ChildLine training. The co-ordinators attended a staff training day in peer support run by CHIPS. A peer listening approach was chosen by the co-ordinators with a room in the school allocated for the provision of peer support at breaks and lunchtimes, either by staff referral or pupil drop-in. When the scheme was set up the service was based in the main school outside the pastoral care team's offices but it was decided this was not private enough. Therefore it was moved into the 'mentoring suite'; a room in an outside building normally used for staff mentoring of pupils and extra classroom space.

It was intended that the service would be offered by older pupils for younger pupils in years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils in year 10 were asked to volunteer to become peer supporters, and applied by completing a form then having an interview with staff looking at their reasons for applying and what they could bring to the role. Successful peer supporters were trained by CHIPS.

The CHIPS training was a one day event which was repeated in the second year of the study when a new group of pupils took over as peer supporters. The first training day was led by two regional co-ordinators of CHIPS (for the same region), and the second day by one regional co-ordinator and one CHIPS volunteer. I attended both training days, both observing and participating in activities. Throughout the study the school staff remained in contact with one of the regional co-ordinators and could ask them for advice and support. During the first study year they designed and ran a new

training programme in peer education, for both peer supporters and other pupils. This was intended to train pupils in how to present information in assemblies to other pupils.

Initial discussions with the co-ordinators and their line manager, an assistant head, revealed that primary aims of implementing the scheme were to offer pupils another avenue of pastoral support and to help the school to achieve Healthy Schools status by looking after pupils' emotional health. A secondary aim was to possibly reduce bullying levels, although this was perceived as a potential extra benefit rather than something the school was actively trying to achieve through peer support.

Although the school set up a peer listening based scheme, they called it 'peer mentoring' within the school and called the peer supporters 'peer mentors'. Thus these terms were used with pupils and staff throughout the study, alongside 'peer support' and 'peer supporters'.

Participants

Participants were co-ordinating staff, four tutor group classes (of around 35) of pupils aged 11-14, in each of the lower years, 7, 8 and 9, targeted by the peer support service, and pupils acting as peer supporters (in years 10 and 11, aged 15 to 16). Different response rates of pupils completing questionnaires were obtained at different data waves, and for the individual questionnaires. Different numbers of pupils participated in interviews and focus groups in the study waves due to varying pupil availability. The numbers of participants for each measure in each study wave, are summarised in Table 7.2 later in this chapter.

The selected classes of lower school pupils were chosen at random by the researcher based on the tutor group denomination, and the same denominations were selected in each study wave. Peer supporters remained in the role from January in year 10 until December in year 11, meaning that a different group of pupils were peer supporters during data waves one and two, and waves three and four. During wave one a male pupil was trained as a peer supporter but did not begin the role, apparently due to a negative reaction from his friends (reported in an interview with a scheme co-ordinator). Between waves one and two, one female peer supporter left the school, and two more pupils, a male and a female, became peer supporters and were trained in-house by the co-ordinators and other peer supporters. Similarly three female pupils became peer supporters between waves three and four.

Staff participants were the two members of staff co-ordinating the peer support service (both female) and their line manager (male). All school staff members were invited to complete questionnaires to look at staff knowledge of and attitudes to peer

support, and the school's anti-bullying work, but very low numbers participated and these have not been included in the study write-up.

Quantitative measures

Pupil questionnaire surveys were conducted in each wave of the study.

Instruments

Some instruments varied slightly across the study waves, due to changes in questions and necessary changes to questionnaire wording. For example, in wave one the wording of questions needed to reflect that the peer support scheme was just beginning and pupils would not yet have experienced it, whereas in the later study waves the questions were adjusted to ask about experiences of the scheme.

- i) Pupil Peer Support questionnaire (Appendix V): a questionnaire comprising a mix of open and closed questions on: pupil knowledge of, use of, and attitudes towards the school's peer support scheme. Pupil answers were anonymous. This questionnaire was a modified version of the questionnaire piloted in Chapter Five, originally based upon a questionnaire developed by Smith and Watson (2004). Due to alterations in questions there were differing numbers of items per study wave: ten in wave one; 13 in wave two; 21 in wave three; 20 in wave four. The higher numbers of questions in waves three and four reflect the inclusion of questions on school climate perceptions, in addition to those in the below questionnaire; it was later decided not to use these in the analyses as these data were only available for part of the study.
- ii) Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire (Appendix VI): a 20-item questionnaire available from the Anti-Bullying Alliance. It includes closed questions on pupil involvement in, and awareness of, bullying in the last 12 months, awareness of anti-bullying work conducted in their school and perceptions of school climate. Pupil answers were anonymous. Following the first study wave I identified a problem with Question 5 on the forms of bullying pupils had experienced. The wording only allowed pupils to select one type; in reality bullying experiences are likely to encompass several types and pupils in wave one often gave more than one answer. Therefore in study waves three and four the question was altered to allow pupils to select more than one answer.

Qualitative measures

Observation

Throughout the study observation was conducted of the peer support service. This included observation of: training of peer supporters prior to the beginning of the study; training of the second group of peer supporters, informal meetings with the co-ordinator and peer supporters during visits to the school, and a visit to the CHIPS regional co-ordinator working with the school.

Staff and pupil interviews and focus groups

I held interviews with individual staff members, and a mixture of interviews and focus groups with pupils who had and had not used peer support, and peer supporters.

Instruments

The schedules used are listed below.

- i) Co-ordinator Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 60 minutes. This comprised open questions on the development of the scheme, their involvement with CHIPS, the aims of the service, how the type of peer support was chosen, attitudes towards it amongst staff and pupils, the CHIPS training, perceived challenges/achievements, supervision of peer supporters and future plans.
- ii) Line Manager Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 30 minutes. This comprised open questions on their involvement in the peer support scheme, the aims of the scheme, the attitude in the school to the idea and the anticipated challenges.
- iii) Pupil User Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 30 minutes (adjusted to up to 20 minutes in wave four for practical reasons). This was only used in study waves two, three and four. This comprised open questions on how they heard about the service, how they felt about using it, what it was like and what effects they perceived it had on the school in general.
- iv) Pupil Non-User Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 30 minutes (adjusted to up to 20 minutes in wave four for practical reasons). This was only used in study waves two, three and four. This comprised open questions on their knowledge about the scheme and their attitude towards it. This was adapted for use as a focus group schedule when groups of non-users were interviewed.

- v) Peer Supporters Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 30 minutes. This was only used in study wave two and comprised open questions on how they heard about the scheme and the CHIPS training, how they felt about the scheme, how they became a peer supporter and what it was like, how they felt about the confidentiality policy and the training, their contact with supervisory staff, how aware they felt others in the school were about peer support and perceived effects on the school.
- vi) Peer Supporters Focus Group Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 60 minutes. In study wave one this comprised open questions on why their school decided to create a peer support service, how they became peer mentors and why, the training from CHIPS, what they thought the role would be like, attitudes amongst staff and pupils to the idea, and perceived challenges and things they would enjoy. In study wave two questions covered the work they had done, how they felt about their role, supervision from staff, reactions to the scheme in the school, the CHIPS training, and perceived challenges and things they enjoyed. In study wave three focus groups were held with the new group of peer supporters. The new peer supporters were asked the same questions the previous peer supporters were asked in wave one. In study wave four they were asked the same questions as used with the previous peer supporters in wave two.

Procedure

Four waves of data collection were conducted: wave one in February/March 2008, wave two in June/July 2008, wave three in February/March 2009 and wave four in June/July 2009. The first wave was conducted as soon as possible after the initial peer supporters' training (which was at the end of the autumn term) – near the start of the spring term. The second wave was then held at the end of the summer term, allowing the maximum amount of time between data waves. The same two points in the school year were sampled in waves three and four. The quantitative and qualitative measures used with staff and pupils are summarised in Table 7.1.

At the beginning of the study, and again at the beginning of wave three (which was the first wave in the next academic year), information sheets on the study were given out to all members of staff, all pupils in the classes to be surveyed in the study (four classes in years 7, 8 and 9) and their parents/guardians. These sheets made it clear that participation was voluntary, participants could withdraw at any time, and that answers would be confidential. Parent/guardian information sheets included a tear off

sheet to be completed and returned to the school's scheme co-ordinator by a set date (around three weeks later) if they wished to withdraw their child from the study.

Table 7.1: A summary of the measures used with staff and pupils in each study wave (x indicates the measure was not used during that wave).

Measures	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Staff				
Line Manager Interview	Y	x	x	x
Co-ordinator Interview	1 Y	Y	Y	x
Co-ordinator Interview	2 Y	x	x	x
Pupils				
Peer Support Questionnaire	Y	Y	Y	Y
Anti-Bullying Alliance Questionnaire	Y	Y	Y	Y
Peer Supporter Focus Groups	Y (1st cohort)	Y (1st cohort)	Y (2nd cohort)	Y (2nd cohort)
Peer Supporter Interviews	x	Y	x	x
Pupil Users Interviews	x	Y	Y	Y
Pupil Non-Users Interviews/Focus Groups	x	Y	Y	Y
Feedback Meeting	Prior to Wave Three		After Wave Four	

In each study wave the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire and the Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire were administered to pupils in the selected tutor groups in years 7, 8 and 9. These were administered via class tutors and completed in tutor sessions over a one week period. The peer supporters played a key role in taking the questionnaires to the classes and collecting them, as the co-ordinating staff felt that this would improve their profile within the school.

During each study wave focus groups were held with pupils acting as peer supporters. Ideally this was held in groups of up to eight pupils, but in the final wave it was only possible for all the peer supporters to come at one time meaning there were 11 pupils in one focus group. During study waves one and two focus groups were with the first cohort trained by CHIPS and in waves three and four they were held with the new group of peer supporters. Focus groups lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. Individual interviews were also held during wave two using a semi-structured interview schedule looking at the above issues in more depth. In wave one the peer supporters had not been in the role long enough, and in waves three and four it was not possible to interview individual peer supporters due to lack of pupil availability.

In waves two, three and four individual interviews were held with pupils who had used the peer support scheme, and individual interviews or small focus groups (between two to four pupils) were held with pupils who had never used the scheme. I felt it was not appropriate to conduct these interviews in wave one as pupils had not been aware of the CHIPS scheme very long. All of these pupil interviews or small focus groups lasted no more than 20 minutes (although schedules were designed to last up to 30 minutes). All pupil interviews and focus groups took place outside of pupils' normal classrooms during either lesson time or breaks. The amount of time pupils were available varied due to timetable demands, which led to varying numbers and lengths of interviews/focus groups in the study waves.

During study waves one and two all pupil interviews and focus groups were conducted privately, but in study waves three and four the school requested that a member of staff was always present. The reasons for this are discussed in the appendix on ethical procedures (Appendix VIII).

During wave one interviews were conducted separately with the two scheme co-ordinators and their line manager. However one co-ordinator, the teaching member of staff, left the school before the second wave and was not replaced in her role as peer support co-ordinator. The line manager refused to participate after the first study wave because he felt he did not have enough involvement in the scheme to be able to answer questions about it. Therefore in waves two and three I only conducted

interviews with the remaining scheme co-ordinator, the head of pastoral care in the school. In wave four it was not possible to interview the co-ordinator due to her limited availability, but I discussed the scheme's progress with them informally on a number of occasions during wave four and my reflections are included in the findings under Observation. All staff interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Table 7.2 shows a breakdown of the number of pupils and staff participants for each measure in each study wave, and Figure 7.1 shows the participant flow for the pupil measures.

Ethical practice

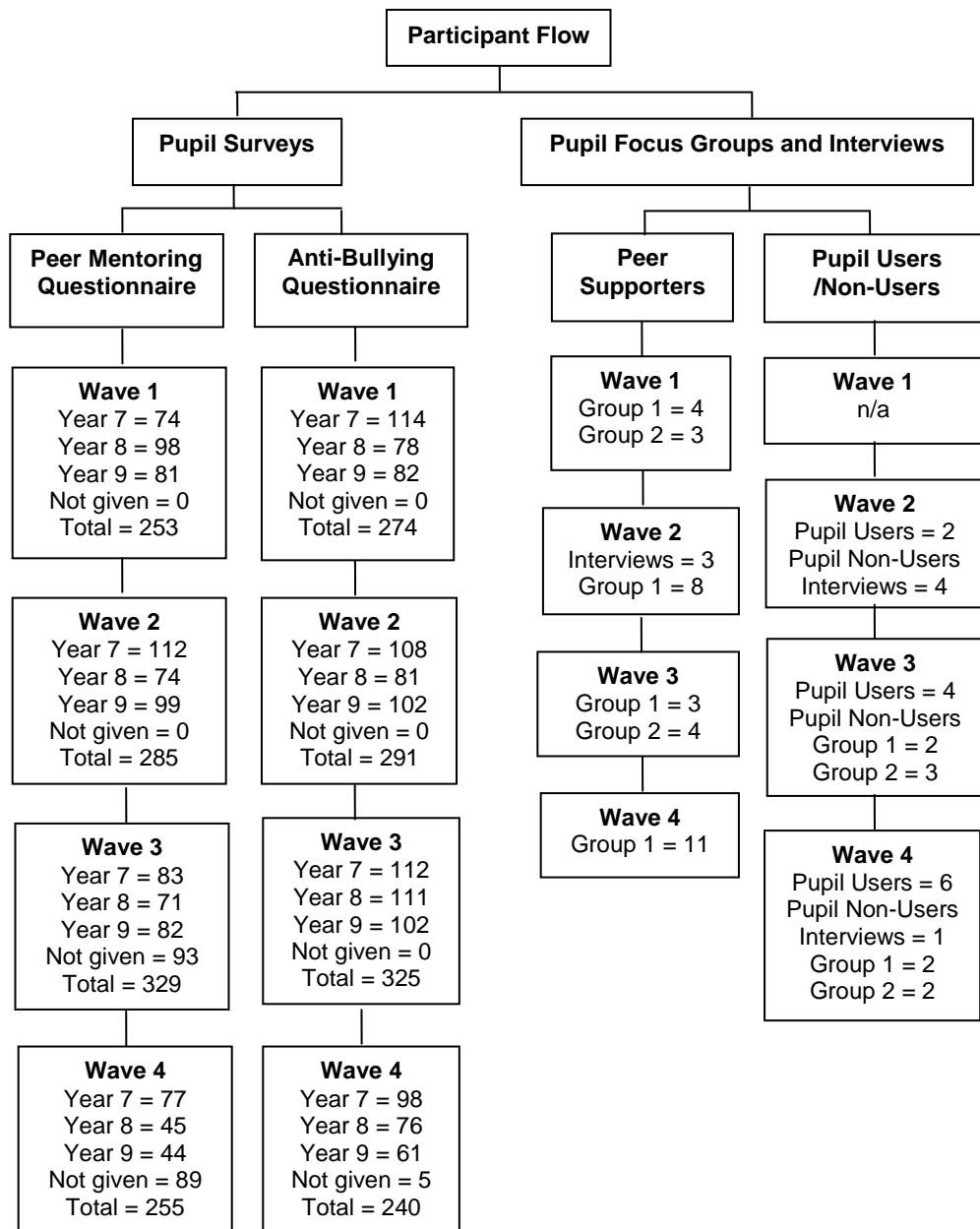
The study was conducted in accordance with the BPS guidelines and was covered by ethical approval obtained from the department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, and the NSPCC. As in the pilot work, I had an enhanced CRB disclosure through ChildLine, permitting me to carry out research in schools.

Working very closely with a particular school and with the CHIPS service over a long period of time presented some challenges for ensuring ethical research practice. Full information on the challenges involved and how I maintained ethical practice in both case studies is provided in Appendix VIII.

Table 7.2: A summary of the number of participants for each measure in each study wave

Measures	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Staff				
Line Manager Interview	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Co-ordinator 1 Interview	1	1	1	n/a
Co-ordinator 2 Interview	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pupils				
Peer Support Questionnaire	253	285	329	255
Anti-Bullying Alliance Questionnaire	274	291	325	240
Peer Supporter Focus Groups – 1 st Cohort	2 groups (4 and 3 pupils)	1 group (8 pupils)	n/a	n/a
Peer Supporter Interviews – 1 st Cohort	n/a	3	n/a	n/a
Peer Supporter Focus Groups – 2 nd Cohort	n/a	n/a	2 groups (3 and 4 pupils)	1 group (11 pupils)
Pupil Users Interviews	n/a	2	4	6
Pupil Non-Users Interviews/Focus Groups	n/a	4 interviews	2 groups (2 and 3 pupils)	1 interview and 2 groups (2 and 2 pupils)
Feedback Meeting	Prior to Wave Three		After Wave Four	

Figure 7.1: Pupil participant flow



Data analysis

Questionnaire data were entered and analysed using SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Scientists) version 16. As all questionnaires were anonymous it was not possible to track individual pupils' responses across the four waves of data collection, meaning that it was not possible to treat the data as repeated-measures. It was also not possible to link individuals' answers on the Peer Support and Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaires, so the questionnaires were analysed separately.

Percentages of respondents' answers on individual questions in each study wave were produced, relating to the study hypotheses, and to explore gender and school year differences.

A lot of information was collected in the Peer Support and Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaires, not all of which is included within this thesis. The Peer Support questionnaire included items which, whilst interesting, did not relate directly to the case study hypotheses, such as where pupils had heard about peer support from and whether they played any particular role in school life. There were also a few open questions which were not essential to the hypotheses. The Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaire included items on bullying outside of school and on the school's anti-bullying measures, which did not directly relate to the hypotheses. Information from non-included items may be included in subsequent journal articles.

To fully analyse the effect of independent variables (IVs) on the data regression analysis methods were used, which determine the strength of the relationship between an outcome variable and predictor (independent) variables. For the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire the IVs were: study wave (time); gender; school year. For the Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire the IVs were: study wave (time); gender; school year. Where analyses involved categorical variables only, chi-square tests were used which check the association between two categorical variables. For chi-square tests, Cramer's V is also reported, which is a measure of the strength of the association between the variables; scores closer to one indicate stronger associations. Open questions in the Pupil Peer Support questionnaires were descriptively analysed to extract answers for relevant hypotheses.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed in full. Transcriptions were analysed to identify information related to specific hypotheses. Unlike in the exploratory investigations in Chapter Five, grounded theory analysis was not used; whilst I was interested in relating findings from Case Study One to the earlier findings I was not aiming to generate theory in the same way.

Findings

Observation

This section of the results provides details of what I observed during my visits to the school. They represent my perceptions of what was happening during the scheme development and issues being faced, largely from my interactions with the scheme co-ordinator over the full 18-month study period. Findings from the formal interviews with the co-ordinator, and with other staff members and pupils are presented later.

The peer support scheme was set up to provide an additional source of pastoral care for pupils, though the general feeling within the school was that pastoral care was already very good. The scheme was initiated and run by the head of pastoral care – it was clear on all my visits that the staff in this team had good relationships with pupils in the school, who would contact them with any issues. Initially this staff member was working with a member of teaching staff but I was given the impression that this member of staff would be more of a secondary co-ordinator. When she left the school between study waves one and two, she was never replaced as a co-ordinator. The feeling I was conveyed was that the school management felt the co-ordinator did not need extra support, and there had been no staff volunteers. The pastoral care team felt quite separate from the teaching body.

The lack of a second co-ordinator appeared to develop into a general issue where the co-ordinator felt she did not have sufficient support for the peer support scheme from staff. As part of the study staff questionnaires were given out but very low numbers returned them and the co-ordinator reported having had to request them multiple times. When I visited the school to drop off and collect questionnaires, or conduct interviews, the co-ordinator welcomed the opportunity to discuss the scheme with someone. She was keen to hear about peer support in other schools and to share ideas for how to improve the scheme. There was a strong sense that she was not getting this support from within the school. A source of frequent frustration during our conversations was lack of support from senior management; although she and the peer supporters had ideas to make the scheme more effective, she gave the impression that senior management simply said no without considering the ideas.

The link with the CHIPS regional co-ordinator offered additional support and the co-ordinator generally seemed very appreciative of this and happy with the service. The two peer supporter training days I observed were clearly enjoyed by the pupils and the co-ordinator appeared satisfied with the training given. Later on, the co-ordinator asked CHIPS if they could provide training for a group of pupils in peer education –

pupils were being asked to create presentations to be delivered in the school. CHIPS developed a training session on this, and both the school and CHIPS co-ordinator sounded happy with how this went.

Throughout, a key issue was the low level of pupil use of the peer listening service. The co-ordinator attempted to adapt the scheme to make it more effective. One of the ways in which the scheme evolved during the study was to attach peer supporters, in pairs, to tutor groups of years 7 and 8. This was partly to make the peer supporters more known to the younger years and encourage them to use the listening service, and to help year 7 pupils with transition to the new school.

The peer support room also changed. Initially when I visited it was clearly predominantly a spare classroom, and it would be hard to know it was where peer support occurred. However in the second half of the study I was shown the room after the senior management had agreed to give £100 towards decorating it – the room felt like a much more friendly and open space with posters, plants and cushions.

Whilst the scheme was evolving, however, this did not seem to be happening quickly. After waves one and two a feedback meeting was held with the co-ordinator, the CHIPS regional co-ordinator and myself, where we discussed the study findings thus far and possible ways the scheme could improve. At the second feedback meeting, after waves three and four, the vast majority of ideas had not been followed through on. As the CHIPS regional co-ordinator commented to me, the same problems were evident and the same ideas being put forward. At the first meeting the need to encourage boys to use the service was identified and a key idea was to get a male member of staff involved. At the time of the second meeting a male teacher had just become joint co-ordinator.

During my time working with the school, what was very noticeable was the absence of ongoing communication between the senior management team and myself. The co-ordinator did pass on copies of the proposed questionnaires and feedback sheets to the management to check, which resulted in my being asked to remove details of reported bullying levels from information sheets. However, the assistant head who was the line manager for the scheme, would not participate in interviews after wave one and did not attend either feedback meeting. I was briefly introduced to the head teacher, who seemed very happy with my working with the school, but received no requests for additional meetings or information.

In the final feedback meeting I was introduced to the male teacher who had joined the scheme as another co-ordinator, partly in an attempt to appeal to male

pupils. Overall, I was left with the sense that the scheme would continue and changes would gradually be made to attempt to improve its success.

Open research question: What issues are experienced during scheme development, and how is this supported by the CHIPS training and service?

A number of factors emerged which were linked to scheme development, including the CHIPS training and support. These are summarised below.

Choice of co-ordinators

It seemed that consideration was put into the initial choice of co-ordinators for the scheme; a pastoral member of staff and a teaching member of staff to jointly run it would spread the workload and ensure the scheme was run by people well known to the pupil population. The assistant head, who took over when the assistant head who had initiated the scheme left the school, suggested it made good sense for him to be involved as he wanted to be involved in the pastoral side of the school.

However, in practice the combination of co-ordinators did not work well. Interviews in wave one with the co-ordinators and their line manager indicated that most of the work had been led by the head of pastoral care, with the teacher supporting her. There was a sense that the head of pastoral care did not have sufficient support and felt they needed to be in charge. This seemed to arise from some misunderstanding over what the co-ordinators' roles were, but perhaps also from the staff not being based together within the school. If the co-ordinators had had greater contact within the school, and thus greater opportunities for discussion, the difficulties may not have developed.

When the teaching staff co-ordinator left the school between waves one and two, she was not replaced. This appeared to make it easier in terms of it being clear who was leading the scheme, but meant the lead co-ordinator then lacked support.

Another issue that presented was the selection of female staff as the co-ordinators. Interviews showed that staff felt this made the scheme too female-dominated and reinforced the perception that it was not something for boys to be involved with. During the feedback meeting after the study I found out about the male teacher who had just joined as a co-ordinator. The lead co-ordinator felt he was a good choice as he had a good presence with boys in the school and could more easily promote the scheme to them.

Support from staff

Related to the above factor, was the need for the scheme to be supported by staff in the school, including senior management. Throughout the study, interviews and meetings with the lead co-ordinator revealed her desire for greater support from senior management. She felt that members of senior management were not involved enough in the scheme and that it would be nice for members of senior management to show the peer supporters that they valued their work e.g. by asking the peer supporters about it around the school or attending peer support meetings. This lack of involvement appeared to lead to a lack of understanding of what was needed to help the scheme be as effective as possible. The co-ordinator reported that she would put forward ideas or requests from the peer supporters or herself, and that senior management usually said no without discussing it with her. There was a clear sense of frustration that those directly involved in the scheme were unable to make the changes they could see were needed.

Greater support from school staff in general may also have been helpful. Throughout the study there were very low numbers of staff returning the questionnaires, and the lead co-ordinator told me that it was a struggle to get people to complete them. The co-ordinator felt that staff were mostly aware of the scheme but that many were not interested. Some staff did refer pupils to the scheme and this worked well, and others were very positive about the peer supporters coming into their tutor group periods to work with the students. However, the peer supporters reported that some class tutors sent them away sometimes and that they did not always feel welcome. This may have discouraged the peer mentors and made this aspect of their work less successful than it might have been. They had also perceived that some staff members did not think peer support was a good idea.

Responding to low use

Throughout the study period there was low use of the peer listening service. It was clear in staff interviews and the feedback meetings that the school wanted to increase use. A number of reasons were perceived by staff to be behind the low take-up, some of which are described further below: the location of the peer support service, a lack of male peer supporters, and low staff referrals. Another reason identified from pupil interviews was some confusion over who the peer mentors were, given that they changed over time.

Although there was awareness of low use, this problem was not overcome during the two school years I worked with the school. Ideas were put forward for

addressing this but not enacted, or enacted slowly. By the end of the study movement had been made i.e. with the introduction of the male co-ordinator, and further moves towards having the peer supporters work with pupils in other ways – specifically working with new year 7s, as well as visiting year 6s in primary schools and being present in the library and clubs at lunchtimes. Overall though, the slow response to the problem of low pupil use limited the scheme's effectiveness.

Peer support location

One problem identified by the lead co-ordinator, peer supporters and pupils interviewed was the location of the peer listening service. The peer mentoring suite was outside of the main school, and served other purposes. During most of the study period building works in the school made it more difficult to find this area in the school grounds. For new year 7s finding the peer support service was clearly going to be challenging.

Efforts were made to overcome this challenge. Posters in the school gave the location, peer supporters took pupils out of their tutor groups to visit the suite, and they also made signs with arrows pointing to the room. Unfortunately, members of staff took down these posters, further evidencing the problem of not having enough staff support for the scheme.

The actual environment of the suite itself was perceived as both positive and negative. In the first two waves, focus groups with peer supporters highlighted the feeling that the room was not a pleasant area for the nature of the service. It was felt to be too sterile, and unwelcoming. The lead co-ordinator agreed with this and asked for a budget to decorate the room. It took a long time for this to be granted, but when possible the decoration made a difference. Appealing posters, plants and cushions were added and the peer supporters felt much happier with the area.

Pupil users also commented that the area was comfortable, and a good place to talk about your problems. The location of the room was also advantageous, in that users appreciated the confidentiality it offered.

Selection of peer supporters and gender imbalance

Another important factor was the selection of pupils to be peer supporters. Staff had clearly given a lot of thought to choosing suitable pupils, and the peer supporters I worked with were all very keen and motivated during training and in focus groups. The lead co-ordinator in interviews suggested that it was important to have peer supporters whom other pupils would want to talk to, which meant having a mix that represented the student body; not only 'model' pupils with high grades.

However, there was a slight clash with senior management, who did not support the inclusion of pupils with more unfavourable records of behaviour. One pupil who applied just before the start of the study had been rejected by management for this reason, though she was told that if her record improved she could apply again.

A problem the lead co-ordinator identified in the later parts of the study was that the scheme attracted quieter pupils who had themselves experienced interpersonal problems in school. Indeed, several peer supporters reported that they volunteered because they had been bullied at school in the past and wanted to make a difference for others. These pupils were positive additions as they were motivated and good listeners, but the co-ordinator felt they would not appeal to all target pupils. She suggested that more popular pupils may give the scheme greater kudos within the school which would encourage greater use.

Comments from target pupils largely did not support this view. When asked what type of person would make a good peer supporter, the most common responses were someone who was kind, a good listener, wanted to do the role, and who had experienced similar problems in the past. A key attraction of speaking to a peer supporter was that they would be able to relate more to the users' issues than a member of staff. In this sense therefore, the scheme did seem to be attracting suitable peer supporters.

The lead co-ordinator reported overcoming the challenge of having some peer supporters who were less confident in talking with others, by assigning them other roles in the scheme. This included things like designing posters, and appeared to be quite successful.

Another positive quality of the peer supporters was resilience. Particularly in the first half of the study, some peer supporters reported being picked on by other pupils for being a peer supporter. One male pupil quit the role because of this, but others felt that they would not let this perturb them and that these pupils were not really friends if they treated them in this way. Interestingly, one user interviewed also reported that some people got picked on for being a peer supporter. However, one peer supporter said that people who had laughed at the peer supporters to begin with had become interested in the role themselves.

One area of difficulty in the selection of peer supporters was achieving a gender balance. In the first cohort, the only male peer supporter quit due to bullying and only one other boy joined the scheme later. The lead co-ordinator and pupils interviewed perceived that the lack of male peer supporters put off male pupils from using the peer listening service. The role was not seen as masculine within the pupil population, and

during the study period staff perceived that the lack of a male co-ordinator did not help this.

Support for peer supporters

A side effect of low pupil use was the demotivation of peer supporters. Pupils were very keen to start their role but then found they could be sat in the room with nothing to do. The scheme was continually advertised to ensure pupil awareness, but frustratingly in pupil surveys done by the school some pupils still reported that they had not seen the advertisements. However, in my interviews both users and non-users particularly mentioned being aware due to assemblies.

One way this was tackled was by giving target pupils an individual business card with details of the scheme. Unfortunately pupils found that these could be quite easily ripped up, and the co-ordinator and peer supporters saw this happening. Some peer supporters had seen older pupils taking the cards from others and destroying them. Although the peer supporters had also seen some pupils storing the cards, this was demotivating.

Therefore the co-ordinator was aware that she needed to keep the peer supporters doing some sort of activities. Expanding their role into working with tutor groups, going into primary schools and being present in other school areas in lunchtimes was effective. Regular supervision meetings also ensured the peer supporters were supported and encouraged.

It was though felt that greater recognition from senior staff would help keep them motivated. During the first feedback meeting the CHIPS regional co-ordinator suggested that the school sign up to an external programme, where if the peer supporters demonstrated meeting certain skills and achievements they would receive a certificate. The co-ordinator agreed that this would be positive in giving the pupils something to aim for, recognising their work and giving them a useful achievement for their CV.

However, later interviews with the co-ordinator revealed that senior management had refused this idea. In the interview with the scheme line manager in wave one he had commented that he did not want the scheme to only be about giving some pupils something for their CV, although he recognised that this was a positive aspect.

Support from CHIPS and other external sources

A way that the peer supporters, and the co-ordinator, were supported was via involvement with external organisations. The CHIPS training was very well received by both staff and pupils. It was enjoyable and was seen as preparing the students well for their role. One area where the training could have been more useful was preparing the peer supporters for the initial low use of the scheme.

Later in the study period the co-ordinator had asked the CHIPS regional co-ordinator if CHIPS could provide training for some pupils in peer education. The CHIPS staff had not provided this before but put together a training programme, and felt this had been a useful thing for them to do. The co-ordinator at the school felt this had gone well, although ultimately time was not allocated in the school timetable for all presentations to be done at this time. Again, there was frustration that senior management was not enabling peer support to be effective.

The co-ordinator had regular contact with the CHIPS regional co-ordinator, looking for ideas of ways to direct the scheme and for possible opportunities for the peer supporters. During the first year of the study the peer supporters attended a one-day regional conference on peer support with pupils from other schools, not organised by CHIPS. This was seen as useful for continuing the pupils' development. In the second year this event did not go ahead due to lack of interest. The co-ordinator contacted CHIPS to see if they could run a similar event but lack of interest and funding meant this was not possible.

Such outside support was clearly valued by the lead co-ordinator, perhaps partly due to the perceived lack of support within the school. Early on, the co-ordinator also contacted other schools in the area running peer support to gain ideas for how to direct the service. Contact with other schools was greatly desired and considered useful.

Open research question: Do pupils acting as peer supporters benefit from their experience in this role, specifically in terms of developing social skills?

The question of whether pupils who took on the role of peer supporter benefited from this was explored through qualitative work with peer supporters, using interviews and focus groups, and interviews with the scheme co-ordinator, and with pupil users. Information relating to benefits was drawn out from the transcriptions, and is summarised here using illustrative quotes.

Both staff and peer supporters were very positive about the CHIPS pupil training. There was the general perception that this had helped the pupils improve their communication skills. For the first group of peer supporters, attending a regional conference for peer supporters had also helped them develop knowledge and skills. Specific skills mentioned by peer supporters were learning how to ask questions, how to use body language when listening, and helping them learn not to laugh when someone's problem seemed trivial to them.

Yeah it makes you think about a lot of things, like the questions you would ask. You normally ask like a closed question but I've started, I've been asking more open questions. – Peer Supporter One, Wave Four

In addition, some peer supporters had received training in peer education from CHIPS, whilst many had gained experience in communicating with groups of others in assemblies and tutor group work. Some peer supporters had felt intimidated about doing assemblies to whole year groups but had enjoyed it and received very positive responses from the pupils.

Peer supporters also reported gaining in social skills. For both groups of peer supporters there was a sense that they had bonded as groups, even though they had not all been friends beforehand. In one focus group, group work skills were specifically mentioned. Some peer supporters felt that the experience had led them to make new friends, and spoke of enjoying saying hello to pupils they had worked with around the school. A few peer supporters also mentioned that the experience was good for their CV or career, or for life in general, and one that it had promoted leadership skills.

I think it's good life experience because you're not going to go through life without anyone around you having problems. Things, you know how to handle more things now. And it helps you relate, it gives you more confidence to meet new people and help, just generally help you in life with loads of different skills.- Peer Supporter Two, Wave Three, Group Two

However, it should be noted that some pupils who used the service reported that the peer supporters they saw had not always known what to do, meaning it could be initially uncomfortable. Some peer supporters also said they had found it difficult when someone came to see them.

Despite the issue of low pupil use of the peer listening service, peer supporters remained positive about their work and clearly enjoyed it. For some it made them have a greater sense of being important in their school, and for many the experience of helping someone and seeing them benefit was rewarding.

I suppose the feeling of actually helping somebody sorting out a problem that they couldn't do on their own, that they actually chose to come to you – Peer Supporter Three, Wave Three, Group Two

Delivering assemblies and working with tutor groups was nerve-racking but ultimately mostly enjoyable.

When me and [A PEER SUPPORTER] went to one of our tutor groups... when we came out it was like 'that was amazing' because they really responded to what we were saying...they were listening and thinking about it. – Peer Supporter Two, Wave Two

However, the role was not without its challenges. The peer supporters had to be able to handle the fact that not all pupils in the school responded positively.

But at the end of the day, when it comes to them being bullied, the peer mentors are going to be there for them. Even if they do treat us like rubbish. – Peer Supporter Three, Wave One, Group Two

Particularly in the first group of peer supporters several had experienced bullying from their friends or peers for being involved in the scheme. One male peer supporter left due to this, whilst others showed great resilience, believing in the scheme and feeling that real friends would not act that way.

We did have another boy peer mentor but his friends were having a go at him saying it's for erm gays and stuff so he quit. – Peer Supporter One, Wave One, Group Two

Some also suggested that they were no longer seen as a good confidante for their peers. Their friends seemed to feel that they would be 'in role' if they spoke to them about their worries as they normally would have done. Like the pupil non-users interviewed, the friends of the peer supporters were concerned about confidentiality and thought the peer supporters might tell a teacher about their problem.

It's like before you were a peer mentor would be able to talk to you openly just like, trust you as a friend, but now you are a peer mentor I guess those people don't want to talk to you like that anymore because they think you'll like go and tell someone. – Peer Supporter One, Wave Two

For some peer supporters it was difficult to manage the time commitments of the role, especially for those who were also school prefects. However, in the group of peer supporters who took over in the last half of the study period, some pupils had given extra time to support those on shift at lunchtimes.

I came in I think it was twice last week and because other people were dealing with other cases I was there just in case someone else came in, I was back up. – Peer Supporter One, Wave Three, Group One

The reason that the second group of peer supporters found that extra people were needed in the peer listening room was very high initial use when they started the role. It was perceived that the assemblies some had run for pupils at the start of the school year were very successful and led to lots of pupils using the service around that time.

We did the... assemblies... there was a great response to that. Because the day we did the assemblies we had I think it was two year 7 groups and one year 8 group straight afterwards..- Peer Supporter One, Wave Three, Group Two

Pupils using the scheme at that point were said to be mostly year 7s dealing with friendship problems. Groups of pupils, rather than individuals, were going to the peer listening room and the peer supporters were resolving conflicts amongst friendship groups. There was a sense that although they were successful at doing this, the peer supporters were not prepared for this type of work. It sounded as though they were acting as peer mediators for groups of pupils, rather than peer listeners, and there was the suggestion that training for working with groups would have helped.

Now I think about it you could have dealt with groups more because you only think of single people – Peer Supporter Two, Wave Three, Group One

Overall, there is evidence that peer supporters did benefit from their experience. Peer supporters enjoyed both their training and working in the role. It was rewarding to help others, and in terms of perceived social and communication skills gains. However, the perceived skills gain did not mean the pupils always knew what to do in practice and the role did involve challenges.

Summary of survey responses

The following three tables summarise the number of pupils who answered the two questionnaires, divided by gender and then school year. Where descriptive data is provided for individual hypotheses, ‘not given’ is included as a category for school year as a substantial proportion did not disclose their school year. A very small number of respondents did not disclose their gender.

It needs to be noted that the study was held over two school years, meaning that pupils progressed a school year between waves two and three. Pupils who were in year 7 in waves one and two are the year 8 pupils in waves three and four. Also, the pupils in year 8 in waves one and two are the year 9 pupils in waves three and four. This means that some cohort effects, rather than school year effects, may potentially be seen in the data – these are mentioned where appropriate in the findings.

Table 7.3: Numbers of pupils that completed the study questionnaires, divided by gender (M=male pupils; F=female pupils; N=gender not given)

Questionnaire	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Peer	253	285	329	255
Mentoring	(119F; 132M; 2N)	(147F; 132M; 6N)	(161F; 164M; 4N)	(121F; 129M; 5N)
Anti-Bullying	274	291	325	240
Alliance	(139M; 133F; 2N)	(143M; 146F; 2N)	(165M; 159F; 1N)	(125M; 113F; 2N)

Table 7.4: Number of pupils that completed the peer mentoring questionnaire in each school year

School Year	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Year 7	74	112	83	77
Year 8	98	74	71	45
Year 9	81	99	82	44
Not given	0	0	93	89

Table 7.5: Number of pupils that completed the anti-bullying alliance questionnaire in each school year

School Year	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Year 7	114	108	112	98
Year 8	78	81	111	76
Year 9	82	102	102	61
Not given	0	0	0	5

Hypothesis One: Pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme will increase

It was hypothesised that over the study period, target pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme would increase. Within the peer mentoring questionnaire three yes or no questions addressed this.

Pupils were asked if they were aware there was a peer support scheme in their school, and could answer yes or no. Table 7.6 shows the responses overall and divided by school year.

The pupils' responses were analysed using a 4x2 chi-square, with a significant result, $\chi^2 (3, n=1115) = 52.09, p<.001$. Over the four study waves a significantly increasing number of pupils were aware that their school had peer support, though from the descriptive data it is clear that the greatest increase occurred in the first six months of the scheme. The strength of association, measured by Cramer's V, between wave and pupils' answers was .216, $p<.001$, indicating a low-moderate association. It

can also be seen in Table 7.6 that pupils in year 9 were consistently less aware of the scheme than those in years 7 and 8.

Table 7.6: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they knew there was a peer mentoring scheme

School Year	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Year 7	65.7%	96.4%	88.0%	94.8%
Year 8	81.4%	87.8%	94.4%	97.8%
Year 9	67.5%	87.9%	87.8%	86.4%
Not given	-	-	85.9%	86.5%
Overall	72.5%	91.2%	88.7%	91.0%

Pupils were also asked if they knew how to use the peer support scheme for themselves or a friend, again being able to answer yes or no. Table 7.7 shows the proportion of pupils responding yes overall, and divided by school year. A significant effect was also found in a 4x2 chi-square, $\chi^2(3, n=109) = 10.15, p=.017$, showing that over the study period an increasing proportion of pupils knew how to access help from the scheme. However, for this analysis Cramer's V was .096, $p<.05$, showing only a low association.

It is clear from the descriptive data that this pattern was not consistent across the years and study waves. The proportion of year 7 pupils who said yes initially increased between wave one and two but then decreased, which is likely to reflect lower knowledge amongst the new cohort of year 7 pupils in the last two study waves. For year 8s this knowledge increases between waves one and two, then increases by a large amount by wave three. This is likely to reflect that in wave three the previous year 7s who were largely aware of how to use the scheme had become year 8 pupils. For the year 9s, there was a big drop between waves one and two but an increase in the last two waves, likely reflecting the moving up in year of the previous year 8 cohort. It appears that initial knowledge was somewhat lower as school years increased, but that as cohorts moved through the school their knowledge increased by the end of the study.

Table 7.7: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they would know how to use peer mentoring for themselves or a friend

School Year	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Year 7	56.5%	79.0%	47.0%	48.0%
Year 8	45.7%	51.4%	74.6%	82.2%
Year 9	41.8%	26.3%	49.4%	61.4%
Not given	-	-	56.5%	61.4%
Overall	47.2%	52.9%	56.3%	61.1%

Pupils were also asked if they knew who some of the peer mentors in their school were, and again could answer yes or no. When looking at these responses it should be remembered that in waves three and four a new group of peer supporters had taken over. This question was not asked in wave one as the scheme had just begun and pupils were very unlikely to have been introduced to the peer supporters at that stage. Table 7.8 shows the proportions of pupils who said yes to this question.

Table 7.8: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they knew who some of the peer mentors were

School Year	Study Wave		
	Two	Three	Four
Year 7	80.6%	65.0%	48.6%
Year 8	52.7%	67.6%	56.8%
Year 9	38.1%	43.8%	29.5%
Not given	-	52.7%	53.5%
Overall	58.0%	56.8%	48.4%

A 3x2 chi-square was performed and a non-significant result found, $\chi^2 (2, n=846) = 5.79, p=.055$. This result is close to significance but there was a very low association, shown by a Cramer's V of .083, $p>.05$. The summary of pupils' responses shown in Table 7.8 indicates that overall the proportion of pupils who knew who some of the peer mentors were actually decreased across the study by around 10%. The level of awareness was generally lower as the school year increased, with year 7s

initially mostly aware, around 80%, and year 9s least aware, at just over a third, 38.1%, but there was a decrease across all years. This holds true even considering that the year 7s and 8s moved up a year in wave three.

Further information relating to this hypothesis was collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted with target pupils who had or had not used the scheme. The majority of pupils interviewed who had used the scheme said they had been aware of peer support to some extent beforehand, having seen posters or been in assemblies where it was introduced. In wave four a year 7 pupil reported having been told about it by peer supporters when she was in primary school, and that this had been helpful, and other users had been encouraged to go by their friends. Pupils who had not used the scheme were largely aware of it, mostly through posters, assemblies and peer supporters working with tutor groups, though there was a sense that they had not felt they needed to use it and thus had not paid great attention to details about the scheme.

The greater awareness over time of how to access support may reflect the achievements of the second cohort of peer supporters; they felt that they had more success in terms of making pupils aware of the scheme. In focus groups they described assemblies with the target years as being very effective, and they had done a lot of work on making their presence better in the school and promoting the service through posters and a website.

Overall, this hypothesis was largely supported. Pupil awareness of the scheme and knowledge of how to access support significantly increased across the study, although knowledge of who the peer supporters were decreased.

Hypothesis Two: Pupils' attitudes towards the peer support scheme will become more positive

It was hypothesised that over time pupils would develop more positive attitudes to the peer support service. They were asked two related closed questions and an open question.

One question asked if they thought it was a good idea to have the peer support scheme in their school, and they could answer yes, not sure or no. Table 7.9 shows the pupil responses divided by school year and gender, and overall. A logistic regression, a form of multiple regression used where the outcome variable is categorical, was performed with the not sure and no responses combined into a single category. Study wave, school year and gender were included as covariates, and interaction effects were looked for between wave and school year, and between wave and gender. For school year, two dummy variables were created using year 7 as the reference

category; one for year 8 compared with year 7 and 9, and one for year 9 compared with year 7 and 8. Overall, this model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 76.02$, $p < .001$. However, significant effects were only found for school year; for year 8 compared with year 7 and 9, $B = 1.252 (.416)$, $p < .005$, and year 9 compared with year 7 and 8, $B = 1.182 (.442)$, $p < .01$.

Looking at the descriptive data, it can be seen that there was a trend for pupils to be less positive the higher the school year they were in. Significantly less pupils in year 8 and year 9 thought it was a good idea compared with pupils in year 7. There was no effect of wave and no interaction effects between wave and school year, reflecting the inconsistent patterns. For year 7 the proportion who thought it was a good idea rose in wave two, and following this cohort into year 8 in wave three this continued to increase but then decreased a little in wave four. For year 8s, following the cohort there was also a steady decrease. For year 9 there was a fairly steady decrease. It can also be seen that generally female pupils were slightly more positive than males.

Pupils were also asked if they thought the peer support scheme was helping to stop bullying in their school (in wave one they were asked if they thought it would help to stop this). Pupil responses are shown in Table 7.10. Again, a logistic regression was run with the not sure and no categories combined; wave, school year (two dummy variables) and gender entered as covariates and interaction effects looked for between wave and gender, and wave and school year. The overall model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 57.40$, $p < .001$. Effects for sex, school year and an interaction were found. The gender effect indicated that generally boys more than girls agreed that peer support was helping to stop bullying, $B = -.916 (.428)$, $p < .05$. Pupil responses were significantly different for year 8 (compared with year 7 and 9), $B = 1.590 (.478)$, $p < .005$, and year 9 (compared with year 7 and 8), $B = -1.752 (.563)$, $p < .005$. Particularly initially, pupils in higher school years generally were less positive that peer support was helping to stop bullying. Overall, the proportion who answered yes remained fairly steady. However, within each school year there was not a sustained decrease over time. For year 8s and 9s there was an increase in wave three, and for year 7s there was a small increase in the last period. There was however, a significant interaction between study wave and year 8, $B = -.395 (.180)$, $p < .05$.

Further information relating to this hypothesis was collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted with target pupils who had or had not used the scheme. Interviews with pupil users suggested a small but growing body of pupils who had used the scheme and had a positive attitude towards it, as users had often been encouraged to go by their friends and then they too developed a positive attitude. Some users had

felt it was a good idea when they heard about it, feeling that being able to talk to someone around your own age was helpful, or had enjoyed the peer supporters visiting their tutor groups. However, some mentioned feeling nervous or finding it scary to begin with; most said they had then been relaxed though one pupil said he would not use it again even though it had helped because he still felt nervous. Non-users generally thought it was a good idea for pupils who needed help but held concerns over whether the peer supporters could be trusted to keep confidentiality, particularly given that they were in the older years.

Peer supporters said in focus groups that there were mixed responses from other pupils, with some finding it very valuable and others treating it as a joke and coming with problems that were not genuine.

Overall, this hypothesis was not supported. The proportions of pupils who felt peer support was a good idea and that it was helping to stop bullying remained very consistent across the study. Interestingly, there was a clear pattern of pupils being less positive the higher the school year they were in.

Table 7.9: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who answered yes, not sure or no to whether they felt having peer mentoring in their school was a good idea

School Year	Study Wave											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No
Year 7	53.4%	37.9%	8.6%	68.0%	28.2%	3.9%	59.8%	34.1%	6.1%	53.3%	41.3%	5.3%
Male	46.7%	40.0%	13.3%	64.0%	28.0%	8.0%	38.9%	52.8%	8.3%	34.3%	57.1%	8.6%
Female	63.0%	33.3%	3.7%	71.2%	28.8%	0%	77.8%	20.0%	2.2%	71.8%	25.6%	2.6%
Year 8	40.0%	45.3%	14.7%	31.1%	45.9%	23.0%	58.6%	35.7%	5.7%	44.4%	40.0%	15.6%
Male	39.6%	49.1%	11.3%	27.0%	56.8%	16.2%	62.5%	34.4%	3.1%	43.5%	34.8%	21.7%
Female	40.5%	40.5%	19.0%	39.4%	36.4%	24.2%	55.3%	36.8%	7.9%	45.5%	45.5%	9.1%
Year 9	33.3%	52.6%	14.1%	26.5%	54.1%	19.4%	28.4%	58.0%	13.6%	22.7%	56.8%	20.5%
Male	35.1%	45.9%	18.9%	27.5%	47.5%	25.0%	25.6%	51.3%	23.5%	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%
Female	32.5%	57.5%	10.0%	26.3%	57.9%	15.8%	31.7%	65.9%	2.2%	16.0%	68.0%	16.0%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.7%	48.4%	11.0%	40.4%	39.3%	20.2%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	36.4%	54.5%	9.1%	30.8%	42.3%	26.9%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	48.6%	37.1%	14.3%	55.9%	35.3%	8.8%
Overall	41.1%	45.9%	13.0%	43.3%	42.2%	14.5%	46.3%	44.4%	9.3%	41.9%	43.1%	15.0%

Table 7.10: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who answered yes, not sure or no to whether they felt having peer support would help (wave one)/was helping to stop bullying

School Year	Study Wave											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No
Year 7	36.5%	44.2%	19.2%	42.3%	45.4%	12.4%	26.8%	52.4%	20.7%	28.4%	51.4%	20.3%
Male	48.1%	33.3%	18.5%	46.9%	38.8%	14.3%	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	32.4%	44.1%	23.5%
Female	25.0%	54.2%	20.8%	36.2%	53.2%	10.6%	40.0%	51.1%	8.9%	23.1%	59.0%	17.9%
Year 8	20.2%	53.2%	26.6%	13.9%	56.9%	29.2%	28.2%	56.3%	15.5%	24.4%	48.9%	26.7%
Male	25.0%	46.2%	28.8%	13.5%	54.1%	32.4%	33.3%	54.5%	12.1%	26.1%	47.8%	26.1%
Female	14.3%	61.9%	23.8%	16.1%	67.7%	16.1%	23.7%	57.9%	18.4%	22.7%	50.0%	27.3%
Year 9	13.3%	49.3%	37.3%	9.3%	52.6%	38.1%	11.1%	50.6%	38.3%	9.1%	52.3%	38.6%
Male	22.2%	44.4%	33.3%	10.0%	52.5%	37.5%	15.4%	43.6%	41.0%	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%
Female	5.1%	53.8%	41.0%	8.9%	53.6%	37.5%	7.3%	58.5%	34.1%	4.0%	52.0%	44.0%
Not given							16.7%	54.4%	28.9%	26.1%	39.8%	34.1%
Male							18.9%	54.7%	26.4%	25.5%	35.3%	39.2%
Female							14.3%	54.3%	31.4%	26.5%	50.0%	23.5%
Overall	21.7%	49.8%	28.5%	22.6%	51.1%	26.3%	20.4%	53.4%	26.2%	23.5%	47.0%	29.5%

Hypothesis Three: Pupils' use of the peer support scheme will increase

It was hypothesised that over time pupils' use of the service would increase. Pupils were asked both about their own use and their awareness of other pupils' use. In wave one they were asked if they knew anybody (not including themselves) they thought might like to use peer support, and if they thought they would like to use it, and in the later waves if they knew anybody who had and if they had used it. Table 7.11 summarises pupil responses to whether people they knew had used it.

A logistic regression was performed for the last three study waves, where pupils answered yes or no to whether they knew someone who had used the scheme. The same covariates and interaction effects were included as previously. Overall, the model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 80.03$, $p < .001$. A significant effect was found for wave, $B = .495$ (.252), $p < .05$, for year 8, $B = 3.114$ (.894), $p < .001$, and for an interaction between these two variables, $B = -1.108$ (.310), $p < .001$.

Looking at the descriptive data, it can be seen there was a small significant increase across the study, with more pupils knowing someone who had used the scheme – reflecting either increased user numbers or that pupils increasingly spoke to others about using it. The proportion who knew someone who had used it was consistently much lower for year 9 pupils, and for year 8s there was a significant decrease over time. Amongst the lower two years more females generally reported knowing someone, but in year 9 more males knew someone in the last two waves – though this was very small numbers.

Tables 6.12 and 6.13 show the proportions of pupil responses regarding their own use of peer support. In the questionnaires a small proportion of pupils answered that they had not used the peer support scheme, but then went on to answer questions about their use of the scheme. In some cases it was clear from what was written that the answers were not serious, but in others it was unclear, and therefore it was decided to exclude all of these cases from this part of the analysis.

It is clear that overall use of the scheme was low, although it should be borne in mind that these numbers are likely to reflect only the proportion who formally went to the peer mentoring suite and not those whom the peer supporters worked with more informally. The numbers of pupils answering that they had used it once or more than once were too low to be able to run a meaningful statistical analysis.

Initially around a fifth of pupils overall felt they might like to use peer support once or more, though the proportion was much higher in year 7 and 8s, around 25%, compared with year 9s, 9.6%. In later waves of the study the proportion who had used the scheme was much lower, around 7%, then 8%, and finally 5% in the last period. For year 9s use levels were consistently low and for year 8s there was a steady

decrease across the study. For year 7s there was a peak in the third wave of the study, perhaps reflecting that this period covered the first term that the new year 7 cohort had been part of the school. Across all years it can be seen that female pupils were slightly more likely to either think they might use the scheme, or to have used it.

Overall this hypothesis was largely unsupported. Pupils' own use of the scheme started and remained very low throughout the study period, although the proportion who knew someone else who had used it did significantly increase.

Table 7.11: Percentages of pupils who answered if they knew one or more people who might use the scheme (wave one) and who had used the scheme (waves two-four). Given the low numbers who gave positive responses, actual pupil numbers are given in brackets

School Year	Yes, more than 1 person	Study Wave							
		One		Two		Three		Four	
		Yes, 1	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Year 7	28.3% (15)	20.8% (11)	50.9% (27)	14.6% (15)	85.4% (88)	37.0% (30)	63.0% (51)	26.7% (20)	73.3% (55)
Male	29.6% (8)	14.8% (4)	55.6% (15)	16.0% (8)	84.0% (42)	11.4% (4)	88.6% (31)	17.1% (6)	82.9% (29)
Female	28.0% (7)	24.0% (6)	48.0% (12)	13.5% (7)	86.5% (45)	55.6% (25)	44.4% (20)	35.9% (14)	64.1% (25)
Year 8	12.1% (11)	23.1% (21)	64.8% (59)	35.1% (26)	64.9% (48)	16.9% (12)	83.1% (59)	15.6% (7)	84.4% (38)
Male	6.1% (3)	20.4% (10)	73.5% (36)	21.6% (8)	78.4% (29)	9.1% (3)	90.9% (30)	8.7% (2)	91.3% (21)
Female	19.0% (8)	26.2% (11)	54.8% (23)	54.5% (18)	45.5% (15)	23.7% (9)	76.3% (29)	22.7% (5)	77.3% (17)
Year 9	8.1% (6)	18.9% (14)	73.0% (54)	5.1% (5)	94.9% (93)	6.2% (5)	93.8% (76)	2.3% (1)	97.7% (43)
Male	11.4% (4)	11.4% (4)	77.1% (27)	2.6% (1)	97.4% (38)	7.7% (3)	92.3% (36)	5.6% (1)	94.4% (17)
Female	5.3% (2)	26.3% (10)	68.4% (26)	6.9% (4)	93.1% (54)	4.9% (2)	95.1% (39)	0%	100% (25)
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	14.1% (13)	85.9% (79)	25.8% (23)	74.2% (66)
Male	-	-	-	-	-	9.1% (5)	90.9% (50)	19.2% (10)	80.8% (42)
Female	-	-	-	-	-	22.9% (8)	77.1% (27)	35.3% (12)	64.7% (22)
Overall	14.7% (32)	21.1% (46)	64.2% (140)	16.7% (46)	83.3% (229)	18.5% (60)	81.5% (265)	20.2% (51)	79.8% (202)

Table 7.12: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall in waves one and two, who answered if they thought they might use the scheme (wave one) and if they had used the scheme (wave two)

School Year	Study Wave					
	One (might use the scheme)			Two (had used the scheme)		
	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No
Year 7	9.8% (5)	13.7% (7)	76.5% (39)	1.1% (1)	6.6% (6)	92.3% (84)
Male	3.7% (1)	11.1% (3)	85.2% (23)	0% (0)	4.4% (2)	95.6% (43)
Female	17.4% (4)	17.4% (4)	65.2% (15)	2.2% (1)	8.9% (4)	88.9% (40)
Year 8	8.6% (8)	18.3% (17)	73.1% (68)	0% (0)	12.3% (8)	87.7% (57)
Male	11.8% (6)	13.7% (7)	74.5% (38)	0% (0)	8.8% (3)	91.2% (31)
Female	4.8% (2)	23.8% (10)	71.4% (30)	0% (0)	13.8% (4)	86.2% (25)
Year 9	0% (0)	9.6% (7)	90.4% (66)	2.2% (2)	1.1% (1)	96.7% (89)
Male	0% (0)	8.3% (3)	91.7% (33)	2.6% (1)	2.6% (1)	94.7% (36)
Female	0% (0)	10.8% (4)	89.2% (33)	1.9% (1)	0% (0)	98.1% (52)
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	6.0% (13)	14.3% (31)	79.7% (173)	1.2% (3)	6.0% (15)	92.7% (230)

Table 7.13: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall in waves three and four, who answered if they had used the scheme

School Year	Study Wave					
	Yes, more than once	Three		Yes, more than once	Four	
	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No
Year 7	5.0% (4)	12.5% (10)	82.5% (66)	0% (0)	5.6% (4)	94.4% (67)
Male	0% (0)	2.9% (1)	97.1% (33)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (31)
Female	8.9% (4)	20.0% (9)	71.1% (32)	0% (0)	10.3% (4)	89.7% (35)
Year 8	0% (0)	4.3% (3)	95.7% (67)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (43)
Male	0% (0)	3.0% (1)	97.0% (32)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (22)
Female	0% (0)	5.4% (2)	94.6% (35)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (21)
Year 9	0% (0)	1.3% (1)	98.7% (76)	0% (0)	2.4% (1)	97.6% (41)
Male	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (35)	0% (0)	5.6% (1)	94.4% (17)
Female	0% (0)	2.4% (1)	97.6% (40)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (24)
Not given	1.2% (1)	7.2% (6)	91.6% (76)	2.6% (2)	6.5% (5)	90.9% (70)
Male	2.1% (1)	2.1% (1)	95.7% (45)	0% (0)	6.7% (3)	93.3% (42)
Female	0% (0)	14.3% (5)	85.7% (30)	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	90.0% (27)
Overall	1.6% (5)	6.5% (20)	91.9% (285)	0.9% (2)	4.3% (10)	94.8% (221)

Hypothesis Four: Pupils who use the peer support service will receive some benefit from doing this

It was hypothesised that the pupils who did access peer support would have a positive experience in that it would benefit them. Unfortunately, this hypothesis could not be formally tested due to the very low proportions of pupils who had used the scheme. Pupils who said they had used it in waves two, three and four were asked if it had helped them and if they would use it again. Given the low numbers these responses are not broken down by gender and school year, and no statistical analyses could be performed. However, some indication can be seen from the descriptive data and the qualitative data obtained.

As seen in Table 7.14 the majority of users found the scheme had helped them, with most saying it had helped them a bit. However, in the final study wave pupil users were less positive, with nearly half saying it had not helped them.

Table 7.14: Proportions of pupil users who said the scheme had helped them a lot, a bit or that it had not

Study Wave	Did the scheme help		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a bit	No
Two	22.2% (4)	50.0% (9)	27.8% (5)
Three	20.0% (5)	68.0% (17)	12.0% (3)
Four	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	41.7% (5)

Pupil users were quite evenly split as to whether they would use the scheme again, were not sure or would not. Table 7.15 shows that in wave two about a third of pupils would use it again, which increased to nearly half in wave three, but then decreased in wave four.

Table 7.15: Proportions of pupil users who would use the scheme again

Study Wave	Would use the scheme in future		
	Yes	Not sure	No
Two	33.3% (6)	33.3% (6)	33.3% (6)
Three	48.0% (12)	40.0% (10)	12.0% (3)
Four	33.3% (4)	33.3% (4)	33.3% (4)

Pupil users were also able to write open comments on their experience of using the scheme and these are summarised in Table 7.16 (with comments which indicated the pupil did not wish to answer the open question excluded). Only a small proportion of users replied to the open question, and it can be seen comments were mixed. Some were very positive, whilst others had mixed feelings – such as feeling it helped but that others would consider you a snitch for using the scheme. Others felt that the peer supporters had not really helped them.

Interviews with pupil users revealed more about their experiences. All pupils interviewed said it had been a good experience and that they would recommend it.

It made me feel better because I'd been to speak to someone and it was all going to be better and there weren't going to be any comments again. And it was like, I just felt good. – Pupil User One, Wave Three

I found it very helpful because I could trust somebody and they could be there for me. But on the other hand they could just listen to what my weekends been like or just, like I said a human diary. – Pupil User One, Wave Four

Most had felt nervous or a bit scared beforehand, but found that the peer supporters were friendly and that it was easy to talk to them.

It was a bit scary but they made it able for you to talk to them not about everything in detail but enough for them to be able to help and suggest things. – Pupil User Three, Wave Four

There was a strong sense across the interviews that pupils liked being able to speak to someone their own age. Being just a little older than them meant they could understand their problems and may have shared experiences. Having had similar experiences in the past was considered an important criteria pupils thought could be used when choosing someone to be a good peer supporter.

Someone who can understand other people and think of an option that they could do, options to help the person. And if they had this particular problem before it helps as well. - Pupil User Two, Wave Two

Talking to another young person was also seen as being easier than speaking to a teacher or other adult member of staff for many pupils.

I thought it was a good idea because kids probably feel better talking to someone their own age than an adult. – Pupil User One, Wave Three

Yeah sometimes because when I fall out with friends if you talk to a teacher about it they don't understand because they don't know what it's like. So it helps to talk to someone your own age. – Pupil User Three, Wave Three

However, for a small number of users interviewed, the fact that the peer supporters were older had initially been off-putting. They felt that pupils in older years were scary and thought the peer mentors would be scary too. One pupil reported having had a good experience of using the scheme but that he would be too nervous to use it again because he still found the older pupils scary.

When you're in year 7 you're really tiny so its... scary... Because when you're talking to a year 11 you're like 'Argh'. A bit scared.- Pupil User Two, Wave Two

A few users suggested it would help for the peer supporters to develop relationships with pupils in the school. Having peer mentors work with them in their tutor groups had been enjoyable for most, but some felt it had not been useful as they did not have problems at that time. One pupil also said that this had stopped partway through the school year.

We, at the beginning of the year, we had people on Fridays coming in but we're still supposed to but they don't come in anymore. – Pupil User One, Wave Two

The majority of users interviewed said that their problem, or their friend's problem, had been quickly resolved once they went to the peer supporters.

They get stuff sorted out more quickly than [a teacher] could, like we got it sorted out on the day. – Pupil User Six, Wave Four

The benefits of seeing the peer supporters were twofold: the comfort of being able to talk to someone and having your problem sorted out.

It was quite good because they solved the problem. Instead of just listening to you they actually did something. – Pupil User Three, Wave Four

As well as finding the peer supporters friendly, several users mentioned that the area they had been in was comfortable. Some users had visited the scheme whilst it was still inside the school, near the pastoral care offices, and others had visited the peer mentoring suite outside the main school building. Both areas were said to have been relaxing, with pupils having appreciated being somewhere quieter and more private to talk about their problems.

They were really nice, they gave me their name and we sat down to talk about it. It was a good environment so I felt quite comfortable. – Pupil User Four, Wave Three

Some less positive aspects to the experience were also reported however. One had found the location of the peer supporters confusing, as they were not always there, and said that some pupils had been bullied for using the scheme.

A few users said that it had been difficult to convey what had happened to the peer supporters, and that this could lead to difficulties.

Sometimes they don't get the whole story and they kind of got a bit mixed up so we had to explain it again... - Pupil User Four, Wave Four

A few also suggested that the peer supporters had not always known what to do, and that it might help for them to have training for ideas of what to do for specific situations, such as to help with different types of bullying.

We went in there and there was one girl and she asked us what was wrong but she sat there for quite a long time just going, I should know what to do, for quite a long time... but after 10, 15 minutes another girl came in and she was much better. – Pupil User Two, Wave Three

Bullying was reported by the vast majority as a reason pupils could go to speak to the peer supporters. Falling out with friends was also common, and some suggested you could go about school problems or about anything.

In wave four several year 7 pupils had been to see the peer supporters several times during the first part of the school year, for help with settling into the new school or with falling out with friends. It appeared that the scheme had successfully targeted the new year 7 pupils and supported some who had needed help. However, these users said they had not been to the scheme recently as they no longer needed help.

I've been quite a few times but I haven't been recently because I haven't had anything. I went three times at the beginning of the year because I wasn't expecting the new school. – Pupil User Three, Wave Four

The peer supporters also reported that the scheme had a positive effect upon users, particularly during waves three and four. Some of the second cohort of peer supporters had worked with the same pupils regularly, and said they had been able to see the pupil users gain in confidence as a result. This group had largely helped pupils in years 7 and 8 with friendship problems, and some with bullying, and particularly suggested that year 7s could need help adjusting to their new school.

Overall, although this hypothesis could not be formally tested, there are some moderate indications from the descriptive data and qualitative findings that pupil users received some benefit. Most users felt that it had helped them, though they were divided as to whether they would use it again. Users interviewed were largely positive about the benefit it gave them, whilst users' questionnaire responses were mixed.

Table 7.16: A summary of comments written by pupils who had used the peer support scheme (spelling and grammatical errors are participants' own)

Study Wave	School Year	Gender	User's comment	Was scheme helpful?	Would use scheme again?
Two	7	F	Yes there is some of them do not even help they just say go away or sothing like that	No	No
Two	8	F	The person that tried to help me didn't help me at all. They didn't have a clue what to do. All she did was say 'it was bad' and 'hmmm' and we already knew it was bad.	No	No
Two	8	Not given	Its rubbish	No	No
Two	7	F	It's good but people will think your a snitch for telling on people but I would recommend it for others.	Yes, a bit	No
Two	8	F	It is a good idea.	Yes, a lot	Yes
Two	7	M	It is a brilliant idear	Yes, a bit	Yes
Two	8	F	It didn't work because they didn't have a clue how to help they just told us how bad it was and he already knew, it was a bullying issue that they just couldn't help with!	No	No
Two	9	M	I got better targets year 9 than year 7 and 8.	Yes, a bit	Not sure
Three	9	F	They need to be more helpful rather than just being comforting	No	No
Three	7	F	It helps a bit and can make you feel better if you chat.	Yes, a bit	Yes
Four	Not given	F	Well I only knew the old peer mentors but they've left now so I dont know the new ones.	No	Not sure
Four	7	F	I went about bullying, they couldn't help	Yes, a bit	No

Hypothesis Five: Pupils' experiences of school bullying will not significantly alter

It was hypothesised that the peer support scheme would not lead to pupils' experiences of school bullying significantly changing. The Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire included items on whether pupils had been bullied at school in the last 12 months, when the bullying last happened, what types of bullying happened, who they had told and what the outcome was. However, not all aspects of this hypothesis could be formally tested; due to low numbers statistical analyses could not be run on the types of bullying pupil experienced, and only limited analyses could be run on who they had reported the bullying to.

A small number of pupils replied that they had not been bullied but then went on to answer questions about their bullying experience. These questionnaires were scrutinised and if it appeared that the remainder of the questionnaire had been answered coherently, it was assumed they had experienced bullying and their answer amended. However, if it appeared that pupils had not answered the questionnaire sensibly throughout, or if it was unclear then they were excluded from these analyses.

Table 7.17 displays the proportions of pupils who reported having been bullied at school in the last 12 months. A logistic regression was performed with the yes, a lot and yes, a little, categories collapsed. Study wave, school year (two dummy variables) and gender were entered as covariates, and interaction effects included for wave and gender, and wave and school year. Overall, the model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 48.54$, $p < .001$. A significant effect was found for wave, $B = -.309$ (.083), $p < .001$, for year 8, $B = -1.504$ (.388), $p < .001$ and for an interaction between these two variables, $B = .724$ (.149), $p < .001$. A significant effect was also found for gender, $B = -.742$ (.324), $p < .05$.

Looking at the data, it is clear that the significant effect of wave reflects an initial increase in the amount of pupils reporting they had not been bullied, from 60.7% to 69.2%. However, the level then remained fairly constant for the remainder of the study; thus it appears peer support may have had an initial but constant impact. For year 8 pupils there is a clear effect of time, with the proportion of pupils saying they had not been bullied gradually increasing over the study, from 48.7% in wave one to 82.9% in wave four. For year 9 overall the level of bullying stayed quite constant, with around a third reporting being bullied, whilst for year 7 there was greater bullying reported by the new cohort in waves three and four. In general, looking across school years and study waves, females were more likely to report experiencing bullying than male pupils.

Table 7.17: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who had experienced school bullying in the last 12 months

School Year	Study Wave											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Year 7	2.6%	33.3%	64.0%	3.7%	26.2%	70.1%	8.0%	36.6%	55.4%	11.2%	29.6%	59.2%
Male	1.6%	27.4%	71.0%	3.7%	22.2%	74.1%	10.2%	32.2%	57.6%	14.3%	21.4%	64.3%
Female	3.8%	40.4%	55.8%	3.8%	30.2%	66.0%	5.7%	41.5%	52.8%	7.1%	40.5%	52.4%
Year 8	7.9%	43.4%	48.7%	10.0%	31.2%	58.8%	5.5%	16.4%	78.2%	5.3%	11.8%	82.9%
Male	7.7%	28.2%	64.1%	9.5%	26.2%	64.3%	5.7%	17.0%	77.4%	0%	17.1%	82.9%
Female	8.1%	59.5%	32.4%	11.1%	38.9%	50.0%	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%	9.8%	7.3%	82.9%
Year 9	2.5%	30.0%	67.5%	4.9%	18.6%	76.5%	4.9%	21.6%	73.5%	4.9%	24.6%	70.5%
Male	5.4%	27.0%	67.6%	4.4%	13.3%	82.2%	7.5%	13.2%	79.2%	9.1%	24.2%	66.7%
Female	0%	31.0%	69.0%	5.3%	22.8%	71.9%	2.0%	30.6%	67.3%	0%	25.0%	75.0%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.0%	0%	50.0%
Overall	4.1%	35.2%	60.7%	5.9%	24.9%	69.2%	6.2%	25.0%	68.8%	7.9%	22.5%	69.6%

Table 7.18: Summary of bullied pupils' responses as to when the bullying last happened, overall and divided by school year and gender, waves one and two

School Year	Study Wave							
	One				Two			
	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months
Year 7	28.6% (12)	16.7% (7)	21.4% (9)	33.3% (14)	36.4% (12)	21.2% (7)	6.1% (2)	36.4% (12)
Male	26.3% (5)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	31.6% (6)	33.3% (5)	33.3% (5)	13.3% (2)	20.0% (3)
Female	30.4% (7)	13.0% (3)	21.7% (5)	34.8% (8)	38.9% (7)	11.1% (2)	0% (0)	50.0% (9)
Year 8	23.7% (9)	15.8% (6)	31.6% (12)	28.9% (11)	23.5% (8)	23.5% (8)	26.5% (9)	26.5% (9)
Male	21.4% (3)	14.3% (2)	35.7% (5)	28.6% (4)	18.8% (3)	25.0% (4)	25.0% (4)	31.2% (5)
Female	25.0% (6)	16.7% (4)	29.2% (7)	29.2% (7)	27.8% (5)	22.2% (4)	27.8% (5)	22.2% (4)
Year 9	15.4% (4)	30.8% (8)	26.9% (7)	26.9% (7)	33.3% (8)	12.5% (3)	12.5% (3)	41.7% (10)
Male	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (4)	62.5% (5)	25% (2)	12.5% (1)	0% (0)
Female	23.1% (3)	15.4% (2)	38.5% (5)	23.1% (3)	18.8% (3)	6.2% (1)	12.5% (2)	62.5% (10)
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	23.6% (25)	19.8% (21)	26.4% (28)	30.2% (32)	30.8% (28)	19.8% (18)	15.4% (14)	34.1% (31)

Table 7.19: Summary of bullied pupils' responses as to when the bullying last happened, overall and divided by school year and gender, waves three and four

School Year	Study Wave							
	Three				Four			
	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months
Year 7	34.7% (17)	18.4% (9)	34.7% (17)	12.2% (6)	10.3% (4)	33.3% (13)	25.6% (10)	30.8% (12)
Male	41.7% (10)	8.3% (2)	33.3% (8)	16.7% (4)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	42.1% (8)
Female	28.0% (7)	28.0% (7)	36.0% (9)	8.0% (2)	5.0% (1)	45.0% (9)	30.0% (6)	20.0% (4)
Year 8	4.2% (1)	29.2% (7)	41.7% (10)	25.0% (6)	15.4% (2)	15.4% (2)	30.8% (4)	38.5% (5)
Male	0% (0)	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)
Female	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	41.7% (5)	8.3% (1)	14.3% (1)	14.3% (1)	28.6% (2)	42.9% (3)
Year 9	32.1% (9)	21.4% (6)	21.4% (6)	25.0% (7)	47.1% (8)	41.2% (7)	0% (0)	11.8% (2)
Male	50.0% (6)	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	16.7% (2)	60.0% (6)	40.0% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Female	18.8% (3)	31.2% (5)	18.8% (3)	31.2% (5)	28.6% (2)	42.9% (3)	0% (0)	28.6% (2)
Not given	-	-	-	-	50.0% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50.0% (1)
Male	-	-	-	-	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)
Female	-	-	-	-	100% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Overall	26.7% (27)	21.8% (22)	32.7% (33)	18.8% (19)	21.1% (15)	31.0% (22)	19.7% (14)	28.2% (20)

Tables 6.18 and 6.19 summarise when pupils said they had last been bullied: in the last week, month, term or last 12 months. Both the percentages and actual numbers of pupils are shown, and it is clear that when the numbers are divided by year and gender the numbers are too small to run a meaningful regression including these terms. Therefore a regression was run where wave was included as the only independent variable. A linear regression was conducted given that there was an underlying linear scale for the variable of when pupils had last been bullied. This was non-significant, $B = -0.49 (.055)$, $p > .05$. If peer support was effectively tackling bullying, it would be expected that over the study a smaller proportion of pupils would report being bullied recently and that the proportion of bullied pupils saying it last happened in the previous 12 months would increase. However, it is clear that the proportion reporting it for the last 12 months remained at around a third, although there was a decrease to 18.8% in wave three. Combining the proportions who said the bullying had happened in the last week or month, it can be seen that across the study this accounted for between 40 and 50% of bullied pupils.

There are no particular patterns in the data for gender or school year. However, it can be seen that for wave three it is the proportion of year 7 pupils saying that bullying last happened in the last 12 months which greatly decreases. This suggests it may be an effect of the new year 7 cohort, for which the previous 12 months would also cover some time before they began at the school.

Pupils were also asked what type of bullying they had experienced. Unfortunately, reliable data are only available from waves three and four. In the first two waves the question wording did not allow pupils to select more than one type of bullying but a large proportion of pupils did select more than one, confusing the data. In the last two waves of the study the question wording was altered to enable pupils to select more than one type. From Tables 6.20 and 6.21 it is clear that verbal bullying was by far the most reported form of bullying, experienced by 84.2% and 89.2% of bullied pupils in the two waves. This was followed by physical and indirect bullying, which were each experienced by around a third of pupils. Cyber bullying was the next most common, reported by a little over 10%, followed by racist and homophobic bullying.

Given that pupils could select more than one form, it was not possible to run a regression encompassing all of this data. Initially I planned to run separate logistic regressions looking at school year and gender for each form of bullying, but as can be seen in Tables 6.20 and 6.21, once pupil responses are divided by these variables the numbers are too low to run meaningful analyses.

Table 7.20: Summary of the types of bullying pupils reported for pupils overall and by school year and gender for wave three – pupils could select more than one category

Study Wave						
Three						
School Year	Physical	Verbal	Indirect	Cyber	Racist	Homo-phobic
Year 7	32.0% (16)	86.0% (43)	42.0% (21)	12.0% (6)	2.0% (1)	2.0% (1)
Male	60.0% (15)	80.0% (20)	44.0% (11)	16.0% (4)	4.0% (1)	0% (0)
Female	4.0% (1)	92.0% (23)	40.0% (10)	8.0% (2)	0% (0)	4.0% (1)
Year 8	37.5% (9)	87.5% (21)	20.8% (5)	0% (0)	4.2% (1)	4.2% (1)
Male	50.0% (6)	83.3% (10)	25.0% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Female	25.0% (3)	91.7% (11)	16.7% (2)	0% (0)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)
Year 9	14.3% (4)	78.6% (22)	32.1% (9)	25.0% (7)	21.4% (6)	7.1% (2)
Male	33.3% (4)	75.0% (9)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)
Female	0% (0)	81.2% (13)	25.0% (4)	31.2% (5)	6.2% (1)	0% (0)
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	28.4% (29)	84.3% (86)	34.3% (35)	12.7% (13)	7.8% (8)	3.9% (4)

Table 7.21: Summary of the types of bullying pupils reported for pupils overall and by school year and gender for wave four – pupils could select more than one category

Study Wave						
Four						
School Year	Physical	Verbal	Indirect	Cyber	Racist	Homo-phobic
Year 7	35.0% (14)	92.5% (37)	47.5% (19)	12.5% (5)	5.0% (2)	2.5% (2)
Male	45.0% (9)	95.0% (19)	50.0% (10)	10.0% (2)	10.0% (2)	0% (0)
Female	25.0% (5)	90.0% (18)	45.0% (9)	15.0% (3)	0% (0)	5.0% (1)
Year 8	23.1% (3)	100% (13)	38.5% (5)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)
Male	33.3% (2)	100% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	16.7% (1)	0% (0)
Female	14.3% (1)	100% (7)	71.4% (5)	28.6% (2)	0% (0)	14.3% (1)
Year 9	27.8% (5)	77.8% (14)	11.1% (2)	11.1% (2)	11.1% (2)	11.1% (2)
Male	45.5% (5)	63.6% (7)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	18.2% (2)	18.2% (2)
Female	0% (0)	100% (7)	14.3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Not given	66.7% (2)	66.7% (2)	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	100% (3)
Male	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)
Female	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)
Overall	32.4% (24)	89.2% (66)	37.8% (28)	13.5% (10)	8.1% (6)	9.5% (7)

Looking at the data it is possible however to see some trends. Across school years, males clearly experienced greater physical bullying whilst in general female pupils reported greater verbal bullying. Both racist and homophobic bullying were increasingly reported as you go up the school years, though this could perhaps reflect greater understanding of these terms as pupils get older.

Pupils were also able to say whether they had told anyone that they were being bullied, and could select more than one option. Table 7.22 shows the options pupils were given and the proportions who had reported the bullying in each wave. It can be seen that friends and parents/carers were the most common people pupils had told, followed by a member of school staff, and then a sibling. Across the study only a small percentage of pupils had told a peer supporter, with no clear pattern across time, and the numbers were too small to run a statistical analysis.

Perhaps most crucial to consider is the proportion of victims who had told no-one about the bullying. Given the low numbers of pupils, it was decided not to explore school year or gender differences for this question. Therefore a 2x4 chi-square was run to see whether the amount of pupils who had told no-one changed over the study period. The result was non-significant, $\chi^2(3) = 6.93, p > .05$. Looking at the descriptive data it can be seen that there was a slight trend for the proportion to decrease across the study, but that there was a big increase between the last two study periods.

Table 7.22: Percentages of bullied pupils who had told different people they had been bullied – pupils could select more than one response

Who did you tell?	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
No-one	28.0% (30)	26.4% (24)	19.6% (20)	37.3% (28)
Member of staff	28.0% (30)	35.2% (32)	32.4% (33)	26.7% (20)
Friend	49.5% (53)	47.3% (43)	52.0% (53)	46.7% (35)
Older boy or girl	4.7% (5)	8.8% (8)	4.9% (5)	8.0% (6)
Parent/carer	41.1% (44)	40.7% (37)	47.1% (48)	36.0% (27)
Another adult	5.6% (6)	5.5% (5)	8.8% (9)	9.3% (7)
Brother or sister	14.0% (15)	14.3% (13)	15.7% (16)	14.7% (11)
Peer supporter	4.7% (5)	2.2% (2)	5.9% (6)	4.0% (3)
Helpline	0.9% (1)	2.2% (2)	2.9% (3)	1.3% (1)

Finally, pupils who had been bullied were asked what the outcome of the bullying had been, and could select more than one option. The proportions of pupils

who gave each response are shown in Table 7.23. It is clear that for most pupils the bullying stopped, either because something was done or because it stopped anyway. Given the low pupil numbers I have not investigated school year and gender differences for this question. Individual chi-squares were run for each outcome, but none were significant. For the outcome that something was done that made the bullying worse, the numbers were too low to run a chi-square, but it can be seen that the proportion of pupils who reported this gradually decreased from 5.9% in wave one to 1% in wave four.

Table 7.23: Percentages of bullied pupils who reported different outcomes of the bullying experience – pupils could select more than one answer

What happened?	Study Wave			
	One	Two	Three	Four
Something was done that stopped the bullying	28.4% (29)	20.2% (17)	31.4% (32)	22.7% (15)
Something was done that didn't stop the bullying	14.7% (15)	15.5% (13)	9.8% (10)	18.2% (12)
Something was done that made the bullying worse	5.9% (6)	3.6% (3)	2.0% (2)	1.0% (1)
Nothing was done but the bullying stopped anyway	38.8% (40)	41.7% (35)	31.4% (32)	40.9% (27)
Nothing was done and the bullying carried on	17.6% (18)	20.2% (17)	20.6% (21)	28.8% (19)

All pupils were also asked whether they had bullied anyone else in the last 12 months. Table 7.24 shows pupils' responses to whether they had bullied others a lot, a little or not at all. It is clear that most pupils had not bullied anyone, but around 15% reported that they had. There is no clear school year where a greater proportion of pupils consistently reported bullying others. A logistic regression was performed with the yes, a lot and yes, a little, categories combined, and wave, school year (in two dummy variables) and gender included as covariates. Interaction terms between wave and school year, and wave and gender were also included. Overall, the model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 22.93, p < .005$. A significant effect was found for year 8, $B = -1.415 (.526), p < .01$, and for Wave by year 8, $B = .484 (.199), p < .05$.

For year 8s the proportion who reported bullying others decreased by nearly 15% between waves one and two and then gradually increased a little over the rest of

the waves. By contrast, for year 9s the proportion of bullies gradually increased across the first three periods of the study, and then decreased a little. Year 7 bullies increased by around 5% between waves one and two but then remained steady. Across waves and school years there is something of a trend for fewer females to report bullying others than male pupils, but this was not significant.

As seen earlier, most pupils who had used the scheme and were interviewed suggested that people could use the scheme to get support with bullying. A number of users interviewed had bullying situations stopped by going to the peer supporters. Some felt peer support had helped to reduce bullying in their school, whilst others thought peer support was good if only because it made a big difference for some individual pupils who were being bullied.

Overall, this hypothesis was largely supported. Although the proportion of pupils who reported being bullied significantly decreased, the fall occurred between waves one and two only and then remained consistent. Other aspects of pupils' bullying experiences remained the same across time, although full statistical analyses could not be run on all aspects: when the bullying last occurred, which forms of bullying were most common, the proportion who had told no-one they were being bullied, the small proportion who had told a peer supporter, and the proportion who said they had bullied others. Outcomes of the bullying remained the same also, although there was a slight decrease for the proportion of pupils for whom something had been done which made it worse. It should be noted that some pupils did have very positive experiences of using the scheme to get help with bullying.

Table 7.24: Percentages of pupils who said they had bullied someone else at school in the last 12 months, overall and divided by school year and gender

School Year	Study Wave											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Year 7	0.9%	8.1%	91.0%	0.9%	12.3%	86.8%	0%	13.8%	86.2%	1.1%	12.9%	86.0%
Male	1.7%	10.0%	88.3%	1.9%	20.8%	77.4%	0%	17.5%	82.5%	1.9%	15.4%	82.7%
Female	0%	5.9%	94.1%	0%	3.8%	96.2%	0%	9.6%	90.4%	0%	9.8%	90.2%
Year 8	1.3%	20.8%	77.9%	0%	8.5%	91.5%	0%	12.2%	87.8%	0.6%	14.9%	84.5%
Male	0%	23.1%	76.9%	0%	20.0%	80.0%	0%	8.0%	92.0%	0%	11.8%	88.2%
Female	2.6%	18.4%	78.9%	2.8%	16.7%	80.6%	0%	9.1%	90.9%	0%	12.5%	87.5%
Year 9	3.8%	3.8%	92.3%	3.0%	11.9%	85.1%	0%	26.5%	73.5%	1.3%	16.9%	81.4%
Male	5.6%	2.8%	91.7%	4.5%	13.6%	81.8%	0%	30.8%	69.2%	0%	16.1%	83.9%
Female	2.4%	4.9%	92.7%	1.8%	10.5%	87.7%	0%	22.0%	78.0%	3.6%	17.9%	78.6%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.0%	50.0%	0%
Overall	1.9%	10.5%	87.6%	1.8%	14.4%	83.8%	0%	15.8%	84.2%	1.3%	14.3%	84.4%

Hypothesis Six: Pupils' perceptions of school climate will become more positive

It was hypothesised that over time students would develop more positive perceptions of school climate. In each wave, three school climate items were included in the questionnaire on bullying, on whether their school was happy and caring, if it listened to their opinions and if they felt safe there. For each school climate item a logistic regression was performed with the two positive categories combined, wave, school year (two dummy variables) and gender entered as covariates, and interaction terms included for wave and gender, and wave and school year.

Table 7.25 shows pupils' responses as to whether they felt their school was happy and caring. It is clear that the majority of pupils were positive about their school, with around 80% saying yes, usually or yes, sometimes for each study wave. The regression model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 56.29, p < .001$. A significant effect was found for year 8, $B = 1.314 (.541), p < .05$, and for year 9, $B = 2.172 (.488), p < .001$. Significant interaction effects were found between wave and both year 8, $B = -.407 (.175), p < .05$, and year 9, $B = -.464 (.195), p < .05$, compared to the other school years. Looking at the descriptive data, it can be seen that for waves one and two year 7 pupils were much more positive for this item, but for waves three and four year 8 pupils were more positive than the other two years – most likely because the previous year 7s had entered year 8. However, year 9s were least likely to agree that their school was happy and caring across study waves, though this year became gradually more positive across the study. There was also a trend for females to be more positive for this item than males, though this did not come out as significant in the regression.

Table 7.26 shows the proportions of pupils who felt their school sought and listened to the opinions of pupils. Again, it can be seen that pupils were largely positive about their school, with between around 75% and 80% saying yes, usually or yes, sometimes. The regression model was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 75.39, p < .001$. A significant effect was found for year 8, $B = 1.941 (.547), p < .001$, and for year 9, $B = 2.160 (.515), p < .001$, compared to the other years. However, a significant interaction was only found between wave and year 8, $B = -.554 (.195), p < .005$. Year 7 pupils were particularly more positive about this item than the other years for waves one and two, but in the last two waves year 7s and year 8s were around the same. Year 8s initially became less positive from wave one to wave two, but overall the proportion of pupils saying no to this item decreased across the study. Across the study year 9s were the least positive about this item. Overall there was no clear gender pattern in pupils' responses.

Finally, pupils were asked whether they felt safe at school. Table 7.27 summarises whether pupils felt safe or not, or at most times/places. As with the other two items the vast majority of pupils were positive, around 85% for each wave. The

regression model was significant, $\chi^2 (7) = 20.17, p < .01$. A significant effect was found for year 8, $B = 1.376 (.593), p < .05$, and for year 9, $B = 1.483 (.548), p < .01$ compared to the other years, but an interaction effect was only found for wave by year 8, $B = -.572 (.223), p < .05$. It appears there is a cohort effect within the year 8 responses, as there is a drop in the proportion of pupils who said they did not feel safe at school between waves two and three when the previous year 7s would have become year 8s. For the first two parts of the study older pupils were clearly less positive than younger pupils, with year 9s being most likely to say they did not feel safe. However in the last two waves, year 8 and year 9 pupils were both more positive than before and year 7 pupils less positive – again indicating cohort effects. No clear pattern could be seen for gender.

Overall, it can be seen that pupils in the case study school had positive perceptions of school climate. Generally there was some indication that females were more positive than males, and younger pupils tended to be more positive than older pupils.

Table 7.25: Percentages of pupils overall, and by school year and gender, who felt their school was happy and caring

	Study Wave											
		One			Two			Three			Four	
School Year	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No
Year 7	36.3%	54.9%	8.8%	44.2%	47.1%	8.7%	38.0%	42.6%	19.4%	38.5%	44.8%	16.7%
Male	33.9%	56.5%	9.7%	34.6%	48.1%	17.3%	36.4%	43.6%	20.0%	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%
Female	39.2%	52.9%	7.8%	53.8%	46.2%	0%	39.6%	41.5%	18.9%	45.2%	45.2%	9.5%
Year 8	32.9%	50.0%	17.1%	19.8%	60.5%	19.8%	46.3%	42.6%	11.1%	43.4%	43.4%	13.2%
Male	30.8%	48.7%	20.5%	25.6%	51.2%	23.3%	48.1%	38.5%	13.5%	42.9%	48.6%	8.6%
Female	35.1%	51.4%	13.5%	13.9%	72.2%	13.9%	45.5%	45.5%	9.1%	43.9%	39.0%	17.1%
Year 9	21.8%	42.3%	35.9%	16.0%	51.0%	33.0%	28.4%	40.2%	31.4%	21.7%	50.0%	28.3%
Male	27.8%	41.7%	30.6%	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%	26.4%	41.5%	32.1%	25.0%	43.8%	31.2%
Female	17.1%	43.9%	39.0%	14.3%	48.2%	37.5%	30.6%	38.8%	30.6%	17.9%	57.1%	25.0%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0%	0%	80.0%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Overall	31.1%	49.8%	19.1%	27.3%	52.4%	20.3%	37.7%	41.8%	20.4%	35.4%	44.7%	19.8%

Table 7.26: Percentages of pupils overall, and by school year and gender, who felt their school sought and listened to the opinions of pupil

	Study Wave											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
School Year	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No	Yes, usually	Yes, some-times	No
Year 7	54.5%	38.4%	7.1%	37.9%	55.3%	6.8%	36.1%	47.2%	16.7%	32.6%	51.6%	15.8%
Male	46.8%	43.5%	9.7%	42.3%	50.0%	7.7%	21.8%	58.2%	20.0%	34.0%	47.2%	18.9%
Female	64.0%	32.0%	4.0%	33.3%	60.8%	5.9%	50.9%	35.8%	13.2%	31.0%	57.1%	11.9%
Year 8	34.7%	48.0%	17.3%	25.0%	41.2%	33.8%	46.3%	42.6%	11.1%	29.7%	55.4%	14.9%
Male	36.8%	47.4%	15.8%	28.6%	45.2%	26.2%	42.3%	46.2%	11.5%	23.5%	58.8%	17.6%
Female	32.4%	48.6%	18.9%	22.2%	38.9%	38.9%	49.1%	40.0%	10.9%	35.0%	52.5%	12.5%
Year 9	21.1%	46.1%	32.9%	17.0%	45.0%	38.0%	23.5%	45.1%	31.4%	10.0%	46.7%	43.3%
Male	25.7%	40.0%	34.3%	15.9%	45.5%	38.6%	28.3%	43.4%	28.3%	15.6%	43.8%	40.6%
Female	17.5%	50.0%	32.5%	17.9%	44.6%	37.5%	18.4%	46.9%	34.7%	3.6%	50.0%	46.4%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0%	0%	80.0%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Overall	39.2%	43.3%	17.5%	26.8%	47.5%	25.7%	35.5%	45.0%	19.5%	25.6%	50.4%	23.9%

Table 7.27: Percentages of pupils overall, and by school year and gender, who felt safe at school

		Study Wave										
		One			Two			Three			Four	
School	Yes	Most	No	Yes	Most	No	Yes	Most	No	Yes	Most	No
Year		times/ places			times/ places			times/ places			times/ places	
Year 7	44.2%	47.8%	8.0%	42.9%	51.4%	5.7%	41.7%	40.7%	17.6%	35.4%	53.1%	11.5%
Male	37.1%	56.5%	6.5%	30.8%	59.6%	9.6%	44.6%	33.9%	21.4%	33.3%	57.3%	13.0%
Female	52.9%	37.3%	9.8%	54.7%	43.4%	1.9%	38.5%	48.1%	13.5%	38.1%	52.4%	9.5%
Year 8	35.1%	50.6%	14.3%	24.7%	61.7%	13.6%	49.1%	41.7%	9.3%	42.1%	52.6%	5.3%
Male	25.6%	59.0%	15.4%	32.6%	58.1%	9.3%	46.2%	40.4%	13.5%	37.1%	60.0%	2.9%
Female	44.7%	42.1%	13.2%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	50.9%	43.6%	5.5%	46.3%	46.3%	7.3%
Year 9	37.2%	44.9%	17.9%	32.0%	46.0%	22.0%	34.3%	50.0%	15.7%	30.0%	53.3%	16.7%
Male	41.7%	36.1%	22.2%	29.5%	47.7%	22.7%	35.8%	47.2%	17.0%	34.4%	53.1%	12.5%
Female	31.7%	53.7%	14.6%	33.9%	44.6%	21.4%	32.7%	53.1%	14.3%	25.0%	53.6%	21.4%
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	50.0%	50.0%
Overall	39.6%	47.8%	12.7%	33.9%	52.4%	13.6%	41.8%	44.0%	14.2%	35.9%	52.7%	11.4%

Discussion

The hypotheses for this study were partly supported. Pupil awareness of the scheme and how to access help increased across the study, though attitudes did not become more positive. Pupil use also did not increase, though the proportion who knew others who had used it did. Although the hypothesis could not be formally tested, there were indications that those who did use it did receive some benefit - though they were divided as to whether they would use it again. The hypothesis that bullying experiences would not significantly alter was supported, though there was an initial decrease in the amount of bullying. Pupil perceptions of school climate did not alter, starting and remaining positive.

Observation and the open research question on the running of the scheme revealed important factors which contributed to the scheme's effectiveness, and the above outcomes: choice of co-ordinators, support from staff, responding to low use, peer support location, selection of peer supporters and gender imbalance, support for peer supporters, and support from CHIPS and other sources.

Finally, the open research question on the experiences of peer supporters showed that these pupils did receive some benefits from the role.

These findings will be partly discussed here, but will be further discussed in the context of other findings in the literature and the findings from Case Study Two in Chapter Nine.

The peer support scheme studied here had limited impact upon the pupil population and limited effectiveness overall, though there were some benefits for users and peer supporters. A range of reasons may explain this. One is that the aim of the scheme may have been too general for significantly large change to be achieved in the specific areas measured. The school's primary aims for the scheme were to contribute to the achievement of Healthy Schools status and to benefit pupils by providing an additional source of support. Although it was recognised at the start that it could possibly lower bullying levels, and the lead co-ordinator recognised other specific benefits during the study period, the scheme wasn't focused on improving any particular aspects of school life. The findings of this case study suggest that generally hoping to benefit pupils is not sufficient. To have demonstrable impact peer support schemes may need to target specific outcome areas – which can then be specifically measured within studies.

Another reason could be limited scope for change. As seen earlier, the most recent Ofsted report rated the school as 'good' and there were several avenues of pastoral support already in existence within the school. In the bullying questionnaire

pupils showed that some were able to turn to others for help, notably members of staff, parents/carers, and friends.

There was also the perception from staff and pupils that this was indeed a good school, in that pupils did not experience that many problems. Bullying was considered to exist but be mostly low-level. Although bullying was a serious issue for around a third of pupils, the questionnaires did show that physical bullying was much less common than verbal. The positive perceptions of school climate in wave one and throughout reinforce the idea that relationships within the school were largely positive.

There was a trend though for pupils to be less positive about their school and the peer support scheme the higher the school year. This fits with past findings that pupils' perceptions of school climate become less positive with age (Way et al., 2007). This is almost paradoxical to the scheme's aims, where the clearest target pupils were those in year 7 and 8. It was perceived that these pupils would have most need of the scheme. This was reflected in interviews with users who had found the scheme helped them transition to secondary school and deal with early friendship difficulties. However, if older pupils had a less positive school experience it may have made sense for the scheme to try to improve this. This would be more challenging though, as they were less receptive to the idea and the peer supporters found working with the year 9s harder than working with younger pupils.

One way of using the scheme to improve the year 9s' school experience could be to involve them as peer supporters, as I did find that peer supporters benefited from their involvement.

In general, a peer listening scheme may have had greater use and impact in a school where the school climate was not already as positive. On the other hand in a less supportive environment pupils may not have so easily accepted the scheme, and peer supporters may have encountered more bullying.

The amount of bullying reported in wave one, around 40%, was higher however than the overall rate of 28.8% found in the most recent Tellus survey for England (DCSF, 2010). It appears that there was scope for the scheme to have an impact in this area, and the level was reduced to around the rate for England, just under a third being victimised, following wave one. It is difficult to be sure however that other factors within the school did not contribute to this improvement.

Other aspects of the bullying experience did not alter, showing that the scheme did not change the nature of bullying and its consequences. The most recent time the bullying occurred did not alter, the most common types of bullying did not change and the most common outcome did not change. There were encouraging trends: the

proportion who had told no-one did decrease, except for an increase from wave three to four, and the proportion for whom the bullying was made worse slightly decreased over time.

Bullying in Western countries usually involves older pupils bullying younger ones (Craig et al., 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 1999) but interestingly in this school year 8 pupils reported bullying others the most. As reported elsewhere, boys did appear to be involved in physical bullying more than girls, and girls were victimised more through verbal means (e.g. Stassen Berger, 2007). Older pupils reported more racial and homophobic bullying, which may well reflect greater understanding of these terms – it has been found in previous studies that pupils' understanding of bullying becomes more sophisticated with age (Monks & Smith, 2006).

This study also supports the past findings where peer support did not have significant impact upon bullying (e.g. Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Houlston & Smith, 2009). In the questionnaires most pupils were unsure it could stop bullying, though around a quarter did feel it could. Users who had been bullied did report being helped by the scheme however, receiving support and having the problem resolved quickly. Non-users and peer supporters also identified bullying as a key issue pupils could get help with from peer supporters. It can be concluded here therefore that whilst peer support may not reduce bullying levels, or its nature, it can provide support for victims and stop bullying in some cases.

Arguably, the main contribution of this case study to the literature is the identification of factors affecting the effectiveness of peer support. These were both positive and negative, and the long-term success of the service depended upon the school's response to, and ability to overcome, the challenges. In terms of staff involvement in the scheme, selection of co-ordinators with good pupil relationships was positive but they needed high levels of support from staff, especially senior management, in order to do their role effectively.

Choosing the right peer supporters was also important, though staff and pupil users' perceptions of the best choices differed. Having a balanced mix of males and females was however crucial to the scheme's ability to appeal to both genders of target pupils. As with previous studies, there was some indication that girls were more positive than boys, which may explain girls' greater willingness to engage with the service (Loukas et al., 2006; Way et al., 2007; Koth et al., 2008).

Once in role peer supporters need sufficient staff support, particularly to keep them motivated if the scheme is not being used as much as expected. External avenues of support, such as CHIPS training and outside events, can also be useful.

The CHIPS service largely fitted well with the scheme's aims and supported its development. Training was very well received and prepared peer supporters for their role, though it could have helped to prepare them for possible lack of use and for mediating with groups of pupils. Ongoing support from an external organisation was valuable, and I conclude that this is especially valuable when there is insufficient support within the school itself.

Based on my findings I suggest that external peer support organisations, like CHIPS, could support schools to create networks of local schools running peer support. The lead co-ordinator in this school really valued hearing ideas from other schools and so a formal network could have been helpful. This would mean that less input was needed from the external provider itself, and could enable schools to join up for training events and thus reduce costs for individual schools.

Finally, consideration needs to be given to the location of peer support within the school, achieving a balance between an area that is easy to find and the level of confidentiality it offers.

I feel that a strength of this case study is the longitudinal nature. Studying the development of a peer support scheme over two years allowed in-depth exploration of the factors affecting peer support and the way these can limit its impact. Use of mixed methodology also achieved greater depth of investigation, as supported by previous literature (e.g. Ellis et al., 2009). Qualitative work enabled better understanding of the scheme's development, particularly in terms of identifying the practical factors and the way it supported users.

Even more depth could have been achieved however. It was difficult to achieve everything desirable within the case study. In particular, time constraints within the school timetable were challenging. This meant that the qualitative measures were not consistently conducted across the study waves e.g. the lack of peer supporter individual interviews in waves three and four, and of the co-ordinator interview in wave four. I am satisfied though, that sufficient measures were conducted within the study for a valuable investigation to be achieved.

Larger response rates for staff questionnaires would have enabled better understanding of their attitudes towards the scheme, though the lack of response in itself was revealing. Given that a lack of support from senior management was identified as a factor which limited the effectiveness of the scheme, the lack of qualitative work with the line manager after wave one is unfortunate. Fuller understanding of this issue could have been gained if there had been the opportunity to gain the perspective of senior management.

Peer supporters and the co-ordinator suggested they benefited from the role but quantitative measures of social skills would have been useful to support this. It would also have been useful to be able to more rigorously investigate the benefits for pupil users, using quantitative measures administered before and after receipt of support. For example, it would be interesting to see whether pupil users gain a higher sense of social support or school connectedness. However, the practicalities of achieving this are complicated for a drop-in peer listening service – all pupils in the target years would have to be given the measures at the start as it could not be known who would access peer support. Factors such as the number of occasions they used the peer support service and the type of difficulty they were experiencing would also need to be taken into account, and it is likely low levels of use would limit the statistical testing which could be run.

Even with the measures used in this case study, low pupil numbers limited the extent of analyses which could be run and therefore the extent to which hypotheses could be tested. The consistently low pupil use, though a null finding, was an important finding in that it helps explain the other null findings on bullying experiences and perceptions of school climate. The null findings were disappointing for the school and the CHIPS staff, but by putting them into context, identifying practical factors which affected scheme development, this case study has contributed useful findings nevertheless.

It can take a long time for peer support to become truly embedded within a school. This case study followed a scheme over two academic years, at the end of which there remained low use of the listening aspect but increasing work of peer supporters in other aspects of school life. For this school, peer support was slow to embed in school life – it should be remembered that the school had attempted to create an in-house service before creating the CHIPS version. Given the low level of use and the factors which limited the scheme's development, it would have been surprising to find it had a greater impact upon school life. Longer-term however, with continued perseverance of staff, the scheme may well have greater impact upon the school. Therefore, it may be that even longer case studies would be useful in future.

As will be discussed in Chapter Nine, the practical factors identified in this study reflect those seen in the previous peer support literature, and I feel the in-depth look at these is a key outcome of this study.

Future research directions signposted by this study are even longer investigations of schemes, and continued use of mixed methodology. In terms of

implications for peer support practice, consideration of the ways in which schools can overcome challenges could be useful.

Summary

This chapter presented an 18 month case study of a peer listening scheme in a UK secondary school. The overall aims were to explore the impact of peer support and the fit between the training, scheme aims and design. Mixed methodology was used: pupils were surveyed on knowledge of, use of, and attitudes towards peer support, and bullying experiences. Co-ordinating staff, peer supporters, and pupils who had and had not used peer support were interviewed individually or in focus groups.

It was found that although awareness largely increased, attitudes did not and there was limited use and impact of peer support; amount of bullying initially decreased but experiences remained the same, and perceptions of school climate were positive from the start of the study onwards. However, peer support did benefit some pupils. Pupil users enjoyed the experience, felt supported and in some cases had problems resolved quickly. Peer supporters also enjoyed being part of the scheme and benefited from this. A range of practical factors were identified as being important, including support from CHIPS and other sources. The CHIPS service largely fit well with the scheme's aims and supported its development.

Future research could continue mixed methodology case studies, potentially for even longer periods.

Chapter Eight: Case Study Two

Introduction

This chapter presents a second case study of peer support in a UK secondary school, over six months. Again, I worked with a school where CHIPS peer support training was used and began collecting data immediately following training. The aims and hypotheses were largely the same as for the previous case study, although the question of whether peer supporters benefited from their role was a formal hypothesis in this study rather than an open research question. The methodology was also largely the same. Although this was a shorter longitudinal study, with only two data points, I still aimed to follow the scheme's development and impact over time following its inception.

I attempted to select a second case study school where the aims and design of the peer support scheme matched the scheme studied in Case Study One. This school also created a peer listening scheme, where older pupils in the school supported younger pupils – mainly focusing on year 7 pupils. It also had the general aim of benefiting pupils through the provision of an additional source of support, with another aim of helping deal with school bullying. However, the school was in a different CHIPS region to allow comparison of the CHIPS service across regions. The school was also in an area with lower socioeconomic status.

The aims, hypotheses and methodology are described below, and then the findings are presented and discussed. The findings from this case study are compared with those from Case Study One in the next chapter.

Aims and hypotheses

The aims of this case study are to:

- explore the impact of a peer support scheme in a secondary school through a multi-method longitudinal research design
- provide feedback on the fit between training in peer support provided by CHIPS, scheme design and the intended outcomes

Hypotheses

The following open research question is explored:

- What issues are experienced during scheme development, and how is this supported by the CHIPS training and service?

In addition, it is hypothesized that over the study period:

1. Pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme will increase
2. Pupils' attitudes towards the peer support scheme will become more positive
3. Pupils' use of the peer support scheme will increase
4. Pupils who use the peer support service will receive some benefit from doing this
5. Pupils' experiences of school bullying will not significantly alter
6. Pupils' perceptions of school climate will become more positive
7. Pupils acting as peer supporters will benefit from acting in this role, specifically in terms of developing social skills

Methodology

Research design

A longitudinal, multi-method assessment of the impact of a peer support scheme in an English secondary school where CHIPS peer support training had taken place. There were two study waves over six months: February/March 2009 and June/July 2009. Observation of training for peer supporters took place prior to wave one, in December 2008.

Setting, peer support scheme design, and participants

Setting

The school was a religious mixed-sex state secondary school within London. It was within one of the most deprived Local Authorities in England, within the top quarter (out of 354 areas) on a ranking of average scores on the Office of National Statistics indices of deprivation. The most recent data prior to this study showed that the proportion of pupils in the Education Authority achieved five or more A*-C passes at GCSE was lower than for the whole of England, 53.7%. The most recent Ofsted report graded the overall effectiveness of the school as outstanding, with the percentage of pupils achieving the highest grades at GCSE far above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average, though the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.

The Ofsted report considered the school community as cohesive, within which relationships, including between staff and pupils, are excellent. Pupils' personal

development and well-being were considered high, with staff working hard to make all pupils feel valued.

Although there was a sixth-form this was run in a separate part of the school, and peer support was run in the main body of the school which ran from years 7 to 11 (ages 11 to 16). The school had in place an anti-bullying policy, a Learning Enhancement Centre (LEC) where learning mentors supported pupils with additional support needs, and a community police officer attached to the school. It had also achieved Healthy Schools status.

Peer support scheme design

The scheme was instigated by the head of learning mentors at the school, and supported by their deputy and a teaching member of staff. The former two co-ordinators were female, and the latter male. Peer support in the school began with staff attending CHIPS training and then CHIPS providing training for peer supporters within the school.

A peer listening approach was chosen by the co-ordinators, with an area in the school allocated for peer supporters to be available for other pupils to talk to at breaks and lunchtimes. The allocated area was a section of the school library next to the area where pupils could meet with learning mentors. Peer supporters were chosen from year 10 pupils, with the idea that they would support younger pupils – predominantly in years 7 and 8. Peer supporters had to apply using a form and were then interviewed by staff, with not all volunteers being selected. Pupils' parents/carers were sent letters advising them that their child had volunteered for this role, and permission asked for them to participate.

The impetus for creating peer support came from information about the CHIPS service being received in a mail-shot; the head of the learning mentors thought it was a good idea and suggested it to the head teacher. Around the same time, the school became a training school, which involves providing further education opportunities for staff and pupils; peer support appeared to fit well with this and the school ethos. The initial aim was provide an opportunity for pupils to receive support from pupils rather than staff, with a more secondary aim to help with school bullying.

Within the school the peer supporters were called 'peer mentors' and the scheme called 'peer mentoring' despite the initial listening based approach. Thus these terms were used with pupils and staff throughout the study, alongside 'peer support' and 'peer supporters'.

Participants

Participants were co-ordinating staff, four tutor group classes (with around 35 children in each) of pupils aged 11-14, in each of the lower years, 7, 8 and 9, targeted by the peer support service, and pupils acting as peer supporters (in year 10, aged 15 to 16). Peer supporters and a tutor group in year 10 also completed the social competence questionnaire developed in Chapter Five (shown in Appendix III).

Different response rates of pupils completing questionnaires were obtained at different data waves, and for the individual questionnaires. Different numbers of pupils participated in interviews and focus groups in the study waves due to varying pupil availability. The numbers of participants for each measure in each study wave, are summarised in Table 8.2.

The selected classes of lower school pupils were chosen at random by the researcher based on the tutor group denomination. Unfortunately in wave two a mix up at the school meant that the questionnaires were only given to pupils in years 7 and 8, and not to any year 9 pupils. The questionnaires intended for the four year 9 tutor groups were instead given to two extra tutor groups in both years 7 and 8 – despite having been delivered to the school in packages clearly labelled for each of the intended tutor groups. This was discovered when I collected the questionnaires from the school, and given that it was the end of the school term there was no opportunity to give questionnaires to the year 9s. It was decided to include the data from the additional year 7 and 8 tutor groups in the analyses, but to exclude year 9 data in statistical analyses where both wave one and two data were analysed.

Staff participants were the three members of staff co-ordinating the peer support service. A community liaison police officer who was attached to the school was also interviewed but as this person did not have any direct involvement with the scheme, I decided not to include this. I had intended to interview the line manager for the scheme but was told he had not had any involvement in creating the scheme, and was not able to interview him. Therefore, only interviews with the three members of staff co-ordinating the scheme (two female; one male) are included. All school staff members were invited to complete questionnaires to look at staff knowledge of and attitudes to peer support, and the school's anti-bullying work, but as in Case Study One low numbers participated and these have not been included in the study write-up.

Quantitative measures

Pupil questionnaire surveys were conducted in each wave of the study.

Instruments

The instruments were essentially the same as for Case Study One, with wording altered to fit the particular school context.

- i) Pupil Peer Support questionnaire (Appendix VII): a questionnaire comprising a mix of open and closed questions on: pupil knowledge of, use of, and attitudes towards the school's peer support scheme. Pupil answers were anonymous. This questionnaire was a modified version of the questionnaire piloted in Chapter Five, originally based upon a questionnaire developed by Smith and Watson (2004). Due to alterations in questions there were differing numbers of items per study wave: 18 in wave one and 23 in wave two.
- ii) Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People questionnaire (Appendix VI): a 20-item questionnaire available from the Anti-Bullying Alliance. It includes closed questions on pupil involvement in, and awareness of, bullying in the last 12 months, awareness of anti-bullying work conducted in their school and perceptions of school climate. Pupil answers were anonymous. Question 5 on the forms of bullying pupils had experienced was altered to allow pupils to select more than one answer.
- iii) Social Competence questionnaire (Appendix III): This comprised three individual measures to survey peer supporters' and control pupils' social competence. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), which consisted of ten items using a four point likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Four scales of the children's self-answer version of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) were used to assess general social skills: Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Peer Problems and Prosocial. These consisted of four items each on a three point likert scale (Certainly True, Somewhat True, Not True). The Coping with Disagreements questionnaire, developed as part of this thesis (development described in Chapter Six, questionnaire in Appendix III), had eight subscales of four items on a four point likert scale (Often, Sometimes, Occasionally, Never).

Qualitative measures

Observation

Throughout the study, observation was conducted of the peer support service. This included observation of: training of peer supporters prior to the beginning of the study;

training of the second group of peer supporters and informal meetings with the co-ordinator and peer supporters during visits to the school.

Staff and pupil interviews and focus groups

I held interviews/focus groups with individual staff members, pupils who had and had not used peer support, and peer supporters.

Instruments

The schedules used are listed below.

- i) Co-ordinator Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 60 minutes. This comprised open questions on the development of the scheme, their involvement with CHIPS, the aims of the service, how the type of peer support was chosen, attitudes towards it amongst staff and pupils, the CHIPS training, perceived challenges/achievements, supervision of peer supporters and future plans.
- ii) Pupil User Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 20 minutes. This was only used in study wave two, and comprised open questions on how they heard about the service, how they felt about using it, what it was like and what effects they perceived it had on the school in general.
- iii) Pupil Non-User Interview Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 30 minutes. This was only used in study wave two, and comprised open questions on their knowledge about the scheme and their attitude towards it.
- iv) Peer Supporters Focus Group Schedule: a semi-structured schedule designed to last up to 60 minutes. In study wave one this comprised open questions on why their school decided to create a peer support service, how they became peer supporters and why, the training from CHIPS, what they thought the role would be like, attitudes amongst staff and pupils to the idea, and perceived challenges and things they would enjoy. In study wave two questions covered the work they had done, how they felt about their role, supervision from staff, reactions to the scheme in the school, the CHIPS training, and perceived challenges and things they enjoyed.

Procedure

Two waves of data collection were conducted: wave one in February/March 2009, and wave two in June/July 2009. The timing of the study within the school year was designed to be comparable to that used in Case Study One. Peer supporter training occurred towards the end of the autumn term, wave one was held near the start of the spring term, and wave two was at the end of the summer term. The quantitative and qualitative measures used with staff and pupils are summarised in Table 8.1.

At the beginning of the study, information sheets on the study were given out to all members of staff, all pupils in the classes to be surveyed in the study and their parents/guardians. These sheets made it clear that participation was voluntary, participants could withdraw at any time, and that answers would be confidential. Parent/guardian information sheets included a tear off sheet to be completed and returned to the school's scheme co-ordinator by a set date (around three weeks later) if they wished to withdraw their child from the study.

In each study wave the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire and the Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire were administered to pupils in the selected tutor groups in years 7, 8 and 9. These were administered via class tutors and completed in tutor sessions over a one week period. The peer supporters played a key role in taking the questionnaires to the classes and collecting them.

The Social Competence questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the control year 10 tutor group during a tutor period in each wave. To enable individuals' answers to be compared across waves, whilst ensuring confidentiality, pupils were asked to select an ID number from a list. Pupils wrote their name against the chosen number on the list, and this list was stored securely and separately from the data. Peer supporters were given this questionnaire during supervision meetings with the lead co-ordinator, and an ID number system was also used. Unfortunately, the ID list for peer supporters was lost in wave two. It had been left at the school in wave two to allow peer supporters to check their ID numbers; the lead co-ordinator misunderstood the purpose of the list and disposed of it. Given that there were only a small number of peer supporters, I instead used their handwriting to match questionnaires across waves one and two. After initially matching questionnaires this way myself, I asked another researcher to independently match them and finally asked the peer supporters to check that they felt the correct ones had been matched.

During each study wave focus groups were held with pupils acting as peer supporters. Focus groups lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

In wave two, individual interviews were held with pupils who had used the peer support scheme, and with pupils who had never used the scheme. I felt it was not appropriate to conduct these interviews in wave one as pupils had not been aware of the scheme very long and no pupils would have yet used the service. All of these pupil interviews or small focus groups lasted no more than 20 minutes (although schedules were designed to last no more than 30 minutes). All pupil interviews and focus groups took place outside of pupils' normal classrooms during either lesson time or breaks. The amount of time pupils were available varied due to timetable demands, which led to varying numbers and lengths of interviews/focus groups in the study waves.

Table 8.2 shows a breakdown of the number of pupils and staff participants for each measure in each study wave, and the participant flow for the pupil measures is shown in Figure 8.1.

Ethical practice

The study was conducted in accordance with the BPS guidelines and was covered by ethical approval obtained from the Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, and the NSPCC. As in the previous studies, I had an enhanced CRB disclosure through ChildLine, permitting me to carry out research in schools. Further information on the issues involved in maintaining ethical practice in this case study and is provided in Appendix VIII.

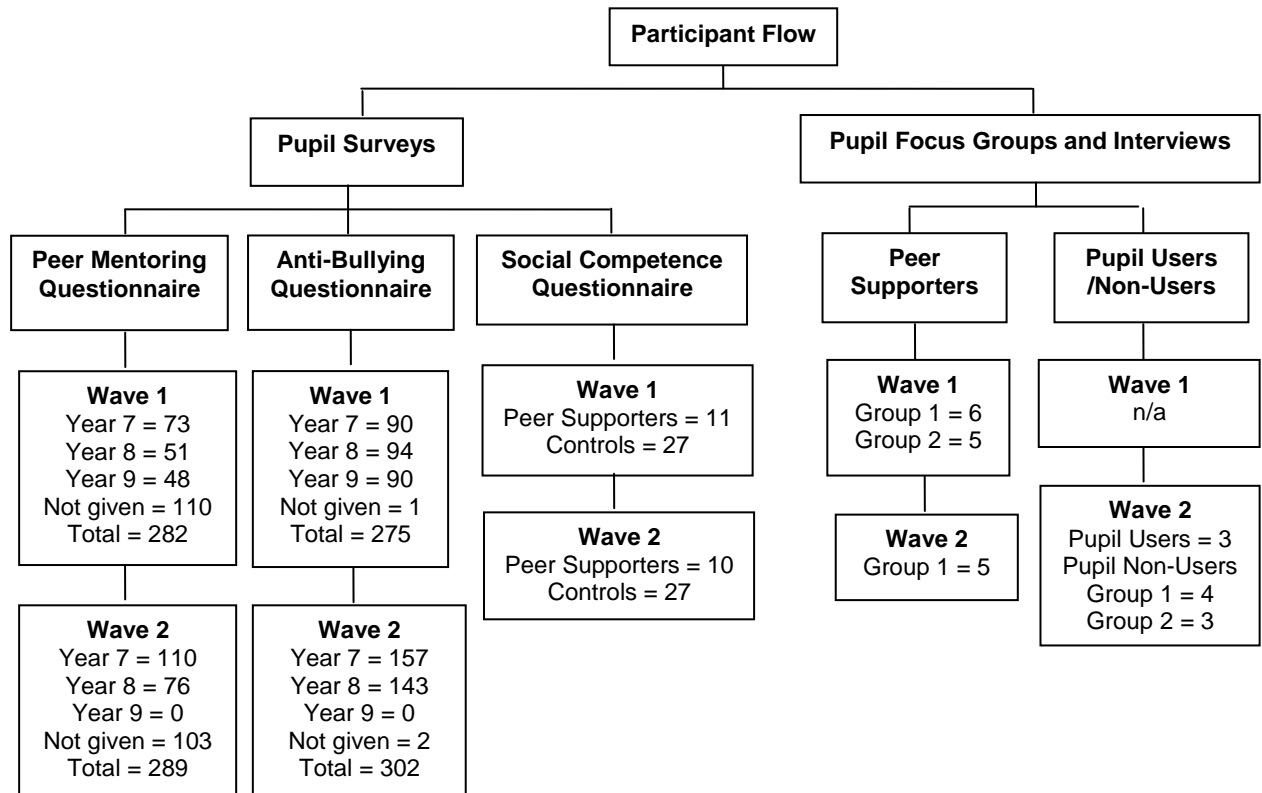
Table 8.1: A summary of the measures used with staff and pupils in each study wave (x indicates the measure was not used during that wave)

Measures		Study Wave	
		One	Two
Staff			
Co-ordinator	1	Y	Y
Interview			
Co-ordinator	2	Y	Y
Interview			
Co-ordinator	3	Y	N
Interview			
Pupils			
Peer Support		Y	Y
Questionnaire			
Anti-Bullying		Y	Y
Alliance			
Questionnaire			
Peer Supporter		Y	Y
Focus Groups			
Pupil Users		x	Y
Interviews			
Pupil Non-Users		x	Y
Interviews			
Feedback Meeting			Dec 09

Table 8.2: A summary of the number of participants for each measure in each study wave

Measures		Study Wave	
		One	Two
Staff			
Co-ordinator	1	1	1
Interview			
Co-ordinator	2	1	1
Interview			
Co-ordinator	3	1	n/a
Interview			
Pupils			
Peer Support		282	289
Questionnaire			
Anti-Bullying		275	302
Alliance			
Questionnaire			
Social		38 Year 10 pupils,	37 Year 10 pupils,
Competence		incl 11 peer	incl 10 peer
Questionnaire		supporters	supporters
Peer Supporter		2 groups (6 and 5	1 group (5 pupils)
Focus Groups		pupils)	
Pupil Users		n/a	3 interviews
Interviews			
Pupil Non-Users		n/a	2 groups (4 and 3
Interviews			pupils)
Feedback		Dec 09	
Meeting			

Figure 8.1: Pupil participant flow



Data analysis

Questionnaire data were entered and analysed using SPSS version 16. As the Peer Support and Anti-bullying Alliance questionnaires were anonymous it was not possible to track individual pupils' responses across the two waves of data collection, meaning that it was not possible to treat the data as repeated-measures. It was also not possible to link individuals' answers on the Peer Support and Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaires, so the questionnaires were analysed separately. Percentages of respondents' answers on individual questions in each study wave were produced, relating to the study hypotheses, and to explore gender and school year differences.

A lot of information was collected in the Peer Support and Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaires, not all of which is included within this thesis. The Peer Support Questionnaire included items which, whilst interesting, did not relate directly to the case study hypotheses, such as where pupils had heard about peer support from and whether they played any particular role in school life. There were also a few open questions which were not essential to the hypotheses. The Anti-Bullying Alliance questionnaire included items on bullying outside of school and on the school's anti-bullying measures, which did not directly relate to the hypotheses. Information from non-included items may be included in subsequent journal articles.

To fully analyse the effect of independent variables (IVs) on the data regression analysis methods were used, which determine the strength of the relationship between an outcome variable and predictor (independent) variables. For the Pupil Peer Support questionnaire the IVs were: study wave (time); gender; school year. For the Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire the IVs were: study wave (time); gender; school year. Where the dependent variable (DV) was categorical, logistic regressions were used, and for analyses where the DV had an underlying linear scale, linear regressions were used. Where both the IV and DV were categorical variables chi-square tests were run, which test for an association between two categorical variables. For these analyses Cramer's V is reported, a measure of the strength of the association between the categorical variables.

Pupil responses for the three measures within the Social Competence questionnaire were also entered onto SPSS and analysed. Scale reliability was checked for each measure, using Cronbach's Alpha measure of the internal consistency of a scale, and means for peer supporters compared with those for controls.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed in full. Transcriptions were analysed to identify information related to specific hypotheses.

Findings

Observation

This section of the results provides details of what I observed during my visits to the school, forming my perceptions of the issues encountered during scheme development. Observational work included participation in the peer supporters' training day, observation of supervision meetings between the lead co-ordinator and peer supporters, and informal talks with the co-ordinators and peer supporters when I visited the school.

It was clear from the outset that both the lead co-ordinator and her support in the learning mentors team were very enthusiastic about running peer support, and felt it would be a good experience for pupils. The peer supporters were also enthusiastic and there was a very positive atmosphere during the CHIPS training day. Both of the learning mentor co-ordinators were present for some parts of the training and there was good rapport with the pupils.

Once the scheme was up and running it felt as though the two learning mentors co-ordinators were chiefly involved. However this impression may have been due to the teaching co-ordinator being based in a different part of the school so that I would not come across him on my visits. It appeared as though the co-ordinators ran the scheme quite autonomously but that the head teacher was very supportive.

The location of the peer listening scheme was visibly a problem. The corner of the school library that had been allocated was not at all segregated from the rest of the large room. Other pupils and staff would be able to see who was talking to the peer supporters and any conversations would be easily overheard by other pupils working nearby. It was also not clearly signed; a nearby notice-board was taken up with school photos and posters, which I was told the co-ordinators were not allowed to take down. As a visitor I was initially unsure that this was the peer support area.

On the other hand it was clear that this area was advantageous in the sense that it was next to the entrance to the learning mentors room. This meant the two co-ordinators based there could see that the peer supporters were on duty and were available for support. During my visits there was a steady flow of pupils coming to this room to see the learning mentors, which made it a natural base for peer support as pupils were accustomed to going there for support. I saw that the staff had good relationships with pupils in general, and so appeared to be very suitable people to run peer support.

When I returned to the school for the second study wave I was told by staff that they had decided to change the focus of the scheme from peer listening to peer mentoring. They had paired individual peer supporters with individual pupils in year 7, and provided the pairs with a peer mentoring booklet to work through. This was in response to low use of the peer listening service, which had led to the peer supporters becoming demotivated. Peer listening was however still available for pupils.

The peer mentoring was going to run in termly cycles, and they were coming to the end of one cycle during the second study wave. The lead co-ordinator discussed it with me in terms of being a pilot cycle. The co-ordinators and teaching staff had chosen younger pupils they felt would benefit but the future plan was to have staff referrals for mentoring. The booklet was designed by staff to lead the pairs through individual sessions, beginning with a getting to know each other activity. The feeling was that they had learnt which parts worked and would adjust the booklet for the next cycle.

A key issue conveyed to me was the need to consider the best mentor-mentee pairs as not all had been successful. The mentoring role was somewhat different to the peer listening role and staff felt in future they might ensure pupils chosen as peer supporters were sufficiently confident and outgoing. One of my visits to the school occurred during the tutor group period at the start of the school day, when the mentor-mentee pairs were meant to be meeting. I saw that not all peer supporters or mentees arrived, and some did not seem enthusiastic about the session. Due to pupils arriving late there was very limited time available for some pairs to meet. It felt as though a different time in the school day might work better.

My final visit to the school was for the feedback meeting after the study, meeting with the lead co-ordinator and the CHIPS regional co-ordinator. The school co-ordinator sounded happy with the findings, and had not expected to see much impact of peer support yet – particularly given the changes in the nature of the scheme. She had expected bullying levels in the school to be higher than pupils reported across the study. The changing nature of the service was discussed and the co-ordinator clearly saw it as continually evolving, as the staff co-ordinating the scheme worked out what would run most effectively.

Open research question: What issues are experienced during scheme development, and how is this supported by the CHIPS training and service?

A number of factors emerged which were linked to scheme development, including the CHIPS training and support. These are summarised below.

Choice of co-ordinators

The co-ordinators suggested that they had been well situated to develop and run peer support. The head of the learning mentors and the other learning mentor both had experience of supporting others themselves, and felt that this was beneficial for running peer support and helping the peer supporters when they had difficulties. Having a third co-ordinator from the teaching staff was seen as helping the scheme have greater presence in the school, as all pupils would be familiar with him but not all pupils would have worked with the learning mentors. The choice of teacher was also seen as especially appropriate because he was interested in becoming involved in pastoral care within the school.

Having three co-ordinators was beneficial as it meant that if one was off sick or away from school, another could step in. However, it was acknowledged that the two co-ordinators from the learning mentors team had greater involvement. The teaching staff member had a lot of time taken up by lessons but was attending all the important meetings with the peer mentors.

Support from staff

The co-ordinators reported good support from senior management. It was felt that little support from them was needed, but when it was required it was readily provided. The lead co-ordinator had received particular support from the child protection officer, who checked all materials going out to pupils and parents.

Support from other staff members was perceived as mixed. The co-ordinators suggested not all staff were aware of the scheme, and thought that a staff inset session about the scheme would help in future. Peer supporters thought that whilst some staff were interested and helpful, others were not bothered about it. The lead co-ordinator said that all the staff they had needed support from had been helpful, e.g. form tutors, were happy to allow pupils involved in the scheme to miss tutor periods. She had also had some staff members approaching her to ask about the scheme and refer pupils.

However, another co-ordinator felt that some staff had been obstructive. There was a notice-board above the area chosen for peer listening and a member of staff did not give the co-ordinators permission to replace their materials with information about peer support. An early idea was to have a box in the library where pupils could post their problems and it was found that there was already a box for this but that it was not used. The co-ordinators asked if they could take this over, but the deputy head in charge of checking the box for messages would not allow this. There was also the

perception that older staff members in particular were less receptive about having peer support.

Peer support location

The corner of the library next to the learning mentors team which was chosen for the peer listening drop-in was reported to not work well. Peer supporters and pupils who had not used the scheme suggested it was too open, and meant conversations were not confidential. It was also not clear that this area was for peer support; not being allowed to use the adjacent notice-board meant there was only one sign for the service in the area. Being in the corner was also perceived as making it less noticeable.

One pupil who had been involved in the later one-to-one mentoring also suggested that the computer room (part of the library) the sessions were held in was not conducive. Again, it was seen as being open so that others could potentially hear your conversation. This pupil also felt it was uncomfortable and did not encourage you to open up.

Responding to low use and pupil needs

A key challenge faced in developing the scheme was a lack of pupils using the drop-in peer listening service. Co-ordinators noted that if they suggested to a pupil that he/she use it the pupil was happy to, but that pupils generally did not go of their own accord. The pupils that did go largely used it for help with homework, rather than personal problems.

Partway through the study period the staff decided to respond to this lack of use by referring pupils to the scheme and running peer mentoring, where students in year 7 were paired with individual peer mentors. This was seen as working much better, for both the mentors and the target pupils. There was a sense that they had not responded to the challenge early enough however, and that there had been a period where the peer supporters had not been having contact with pupils. Another issue was that the first group of chosen mentees were not the most suitable for the service. All three pupil users interviewed felt that, although they enjoyed it, they had not needed to be mentored.

The lead co-ordinator had initially thought an aim of the scheme would be to help pupils with bullying but realised that it had shifted towards helping year 7s with transitioning to secondary school. Interestingly however, all pupils interviewed suggested that peer mentoring and listening could help pupils who were being bullied. This potential help was to give them social support.

The lead co-ordinator felt that it was better to go with where the scheme naturally went, though did hope that pupils being mentored would talk to their mentors if they had bullying problems. She also intended to become more involved in the process whereby year 7s were chosen by mentoring, and to focus on pupils experiencing low-level bullying or social difficulties. A key effect of the mentoring process was that by saying hello to their mentees around the school, the peer mentors conferred social status. The head of year had referred several pupils who needed help with personal organisation, but the co-ordinators recognised that this was not something the scheme could help with and it would be better to match chosen pupils' needs with what the scheme could help with.

The co-ordinators clearly felt that scheme development was an ongoing process of trial and error, where they evolved the service in order to better respond to pupils' needs. For example, they had asked for feedback from the mentors and mentees. Based on this were going to make the booklet provided for mentoring less childish, and run the mentoring pairs for a whole term rather than a half-term. There was also a long-term goal to create mentoring by sixth-formers to pupils at key stage 4, to respond to a need in the school to help pupils with the transition to sixth-form.

Peer supporters' motivation

Linked to the low use of the peer listening scheme, was a drop in the peer supporters' motivation as the scheme progressed. Peer supporters felt bored and that their time was being wasted, and did not have the opportunity to use the skills they had developed. The co-ordinators felt that they had not realised this issue fast enough, and wished they had run training sessions during this time to keep their motivation up.

In wave two peer supporters suggested that they had enjoyed the training and been motivated to go and help pupils with lots of problems – but this had not happened.

Selection of peer supporters

Pupils became peer supporters by volunteering, submitting an application form and being interviewed by the co-ordinators. Peer supporters had found this nerve-wracking but a good selection method, and one felt it had given them the experience of a job interview. Co-ordinators were democratic in selecting pupils, voting amongst themselves, and not all pupils were chosen. One co-ordinator felt that unfortunately some pupils who might have been good were not included, and others were chosen

that were not suitable. Two pupils were asked to stand down; one for not being committed and another who had difficulties listening to and working with others.

None of the pupil users or non-users interviewed knew how pupils became peer mentors. They felt that it was important that the pupils chosen were kind, able to talk to others, and mature. They particularly felt that peer supporters should have had experiences themselves such as bullying, which would allow them to understand what the younger pupils were going through. All were happy for staff to select the peer supporters and felt the application process, when described, was suitable.

A central barrier, expressed by younger pupils in interviews, to going to peer supporters for help was the possibility that they would tell others about their problems. It was felt that the older pupils may tell others in their year or tell members of a gang they were in outside of school. One pupil was concerned that the person you had a problem with could be the peer supporter's brother or sister.

One way to overcome this barrier could be to make target pupils aware of how older pupils became peer mentors and that they are trained in confidentiality.

Fitting peer support into school life

One challenge was finding space for peer support activities within school life. Support from senior management was key, as they allowed peer supporters to have a day out of lessons for training. Peer listening was largely held during breaks and lunchtimes, meaning that all pupils were able to go for support and lessons were not missed. Pupils particularly needed to miss tutor periods to participate – peer supporters missed some of their tutor periods to visit the target years, and both mentors and mentees missed tutor periods once a week to have one to one sessions. Fitting mentoring sessions into this time, rather than in lessons or pupils' own time, had the disadvantage that only a short time was available and pupils felt this was inadequate.

Support from CHIPS

Initially the lead co-ordinator and member of teaching staff attended the CHIPS staff training day. This was felt to be useful, in that it gave them insight into what pupils' perspectives might be. The lead co-ordinator felt that it might have been useful for the day to include some training in communication skills, as not all school staff will already have this and it is necessary to be able to support the peer mentors.

The peer supporters found the CHIPS training day highly enjoyable. They said they had not expected it to be both helpful and fun, and enjoyed having time away from lessons. The co-ordinators thought it was clear the pupils enjoyed this, and had been

able to understand the contents. Staff also thought it had developed pupils' communication skills, and particularly felt that the training on confidentiality had been good as pupils remained aware of this issue six months on.

Peer supporters also felt it had helped them learn how to communicate with others, though some felt role plays would have helped them develop these skills. All reported that the games used within the training to convey learning points had been especially helpful, as they had used them to good effect when working with tutor groups. This was an unexpected benefit of the training, as these activities had not been intended for the pupils to use in their work. Giving pupils ideas of activities to use as peer supporters could therefore be a useful addition to training.

I was interested in whether the change in focus of the scheme from listening to mentoring meant that different training would have been more helpful. The peer supporters could not think of anything else they would have liked to be covered. There was some suggestion though that it would have been good for the training to prepare them for the initial period where the scheme was not being used by pupils.

Staff however felt that if they were to have their training around the time of the end of the study it would be more focused on developing active listening skills. Skills like asking open questions, reframing negative statements and being able to lead a conversation were perceived as essential for being a mentor. The lead co-ordinator planned to provide additional training in the next academic year, but did not feel it was necessary for CHIPS to do this.

However, they did feel that the training had been useful and acknowledged there was a lot to try and fit into one day. The CHIPS training was considered necessarily broad as it needed to be useful for lots of different schools creating lots of different types of peer support service.

Staff had not had much contact with CHIPS following the training, the only contact being to request posters and wristbands for use in the school. These materials had been very useful, but additional support was not thought to be needed. The materials and information provided during staff training had also been very useful in setting up the scheme.

The lead co-ordinator had though found that being involved in my case study had helped the staff to develop the scheme. They felt it had focused them on trying to achieve things by the time of the second study wave. On reflection perhaps taking part in the study provided support that otherwise may have been provided by CHIPS.

Summary of survey responses

The following three tables summarise the number of pupils who answered the two main questionnaires, divided by gender and then school year. Where descriptive data are provided for individual hypotheses, 'not given' is included as a category for school year as a substantial proportion did not disclose their school year. A small number of respondents did not disclose their gender, and these are not included in the gender section of the following tables.

Table 8.3: Numbers of pupils that completed the study questionnaires, divided by gender (M=male pupils; F=female pupils; N=gender not given)

Questionnaire	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Peer Mentoring	282 (155M; 125F; 2N)	289 (167M; 122M)
Anti-Bullying Alliance	275 (152M; 122F; 1N)	302 (174M; 128F)
Social Competence	38 (27 Controls; 11 Peer Supporters)	37 (27 Controls; 10 Peer Supporters)

Table 8.4: Number of pupils that completed the peer mentoring questionnaire in each school year

School Year	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Year 7	73	110
Year 8	51	76
Year 9	48	0
Not given	110	103

Table 8.5: Number of pupils that completed the anti-bullying alliance questionnaire in each school year

School Year	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Year 7	90	157
Year 8	94	143
Year 9	90	0
Not given	1	2

Hypothesis One: Pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme will increase

It was hypothesised that over the study period, target pupils' knowledge about the peer support scheme would increase. Within the peer mentoring questionnaire three yes or no questions addressed this.

Pupils were asked if they were aware there was a peer support scheme in their school, and could answer yes or no. Table 8.6 shows the responses overall and divided by school year. A 2x2 chi-square was performed which was significant, $\chi^2 (1, n=568) = 22.55, p=.000$, showing that the proportion of pupils who knew about the scheme significantly increased over the study, from 78.7% to 92.7%. However, Cramer's V was 0.199, $p<.001$, showing a low association.

Initially year 8 pupils had the greatest awareness, at 86.3%, followed by year 9s and year 7s. This continued six months later, with the vast majority of year 8s, 97.4%, aware of the scheme.

Table 8.6: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they knew there was a peer mentoring scheme

School Year	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Year 7	71.2%	89.9%
Year 8	86.3%	97.4%
Year 9	79.2%	-
Not given	80.0%	92.1%
Overall	78.7%	92.7%

Pupils were also asked if they knew how to use the peer support scheme for themselves or a friend, again being able to answer yes or no. Table 8.7 shows the proportion of pupils responding yes overall, and divided by school year. A 2x2 chi-square, $\chi^2 (1, n=539) = 5.27, p=.022$, showed that over the study the proportion of pupils who knew how to access help from the scheme significantly decreased. However, for this analysis Cramer's V was 0.099, $p<.05$, showing a very low association.

In wave one, year 8s were most aware of how to access support, at 75%, followed by year 9s and then year 7s. By wave two, the proportion of year 7s, had decreased only slightly but for year 8s, there was a drop of over 30%.

In wave two the peer mentoring questionnaire also asked if pupils knew who some of the peer mentors in their school were, and again could answer yes or no. Table 8.8 shows the proportions of pupils who said yes to this question. Just under half of pupils knew who some of the peer supporters were, with a greater proportion of year 7s knowing this than year 8s.

Table 8.7: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they would know how to use peer mentoring for themselves or a friend

School Year	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Year 7	47.1%	44.1%
Year 8	75.0%	42.1%
Year 9	59.6%	-
Not given	60.4%	53.7%
Overall	59.5%	49.6%

Table 8.8: Percentages of pupils overall and in each school year who answered yes, they knew who some of the peer mentors were

School Year	Study Wave	
	Two	
Year 7	51.5%	
Year 8	38.9%	
Year 9	-	
Not given	50.5%	
Overall	47.7%	

Further information relating to this hypothesis was collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted with target pupils who had or had not used the scheme in wave two. Pupils were all aware of the scheme, with the users aware of it before they were chosen for mentoring. Pupils understood that older pupils were helping younger pupils, and about half knew specific details of what happened and how to access listening support. It was commonly reported that they had heard about it through posters, assemblies, being told by teachers and by peer supporters coming to their

tutor group. The three users did not know that there were specific reasons they had been chosen for mentoring, instead believing they had been chosen at random. None of the pupils knew how the older pupils had become peer supporters.

Overall, this hypothesis was only partly supported. Although pupils had good awareness that there was a peer support scheme and this knowledge increased over time, knowledge levels of how to access it decreased and only half knew who some of the peer mentors were.

Hypothesis Two: Pupils' attitudes towards the peer support scheme will become more positive

It was hypothesised that over time pupils would develop more positive attitudes to the peer support service.

One question asked if they thought it was a good idea to have the peer support scheme in their school, and they could answer yes, not sure or no. Table 8.9 shows the pupil responses divided by school year and gender, and overall. A logistic regression was run with the yes and not sure categories combined, wave, gender and school year (years 7 and 8) entered as covariates, and interaction terms included for wave and gender, and wave and school year. Overall, this model was non-significant, $\chi^2 (5) = 8.27$, $p = .142$, and no significant effects were found.

In both waves just over half of the pupils agreed that it was a good idea. Looking at Table 8.9, there is a slight trend for female pupils to be more positive, with more saying yes, it is a good idea, rather than not sure or no. In wave one, just over half of pupils in each year answered yes, with year 7s and year 8s answering yes to a slightly greater extent than year 9s. However by wave two, the proportion of year 7s had increased to 69.2%, whereas the proportion of year 8s had slightly decreased.

Pupils were also asked if they thought the peer support scheme was helping to stop bullying in their school (in wave one they were asked if they thought it would help to stop this). Pupil responses are shown in Table 8.10. Overall, this model was significant, $\chi^2 (5) = 13.53$, $p < .05$. Significant effects were found for wave, $B = -.584 (.276)$, $p < .05$, and gender, $B = 2.026 (.875)$, $p < .05$, and for an interaction between the two, $B = -1.453 (.541)$, $p < .01$. Table 8.10 shows that the proportion of pupils overall who thought it was helping deal with bullying actually decreased from 36.6% to 23.7%, whilst the proportion who were not sure increased from 50% to 59.9%.

Interestingly, looking at the year 7 and year 8 data female pupils were initially more positive about this than males, with greater proportions answering yes, but in wave two this had reversed. In wave one, the proportion of pupils who answered yes

decreased with increasing school year, and in wave two the proportion of year 7s remained higher than for year 8s, although the percentages for both years decreased.

Further information relating to this hypothesis was collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted with target pupils who had or had not used the scheme. All pupils interviewed felt peer support was a good idea, with most feeling it could help pupils who were being bullied. However, all expressed the idea that it was only useful if you had a problem; non-users said that so far they had not needed it and the three users said that it was good but that it would be more beneficial if targeted at pupils who really needed it.

Overall, this hypothesis was only partly supported. Across the studies, pupils were ambivalent about whether it was a good idea, with only around half agreeing with this. Pupils became less sure that it was helping to deal with bullying, with most feeling unsure about this. However, there was a trend for year 7s to be more positive than year 8s, and all pupils interviewed in wave two felt it was a good idea for pupils experiencing difficulties.

Table 8.9: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who answered yes, not sure or no to whether they felt having peer mentoring in their school was a good idea

School Year	Study Wave					
	One			Two		
	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No
Year 7	56.1%	40.9%	3.0%	69.2%	28.8%	1.9%
Male	55.6%	44.4%	0%	64.3%	33.9%	1.8%
Female	56.7%	36.7%	6.7%	75.0%	22.9%	2.1%
Year 8	57.4%	42.6%	0%	51.4%	43.2%	5.4%
Male	47.8%	52.2%	0%	51.2%	41.9%	7.0%
Female	66.7%	33.3%	0%	51.6%	45.2%	3.2%
Year 9	51.1%	46.8%	2.1%	-	-	-
Male	54.2%	45.8%	0%	-	-	-
Female	50.0%	45.5%	4.5%	-	-	-
Not given	58.1%	37.1%	4.8%	48.0%	45.9%	6.1%
Male	49.2%	44.1%	6.8%	41.0%	50.8%	8.2%
Female	71.1%	26.7%	2.2%	59.5%	37.8%	2.7%
Overall	56.2%	40.8%	3.0%	56.9%	38.8%	4.3%

Table 8.10: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who answered yes, not sure or no to whether they felt having peer support would help (wave one)/was helping to stop bullying

School Year	Study Wave					
	One			Two		
	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No
Year 7	43.8%	45.3%	10.9%	33.0%	58.5%	8.5%
Male	35.3%	52.9%	11.8%	43.4%	47.2%	9.4%
Female	53.3%	36.7%	10.0%	19.5%	73.2%	7.3%
Year 8	35.6%	57.8%	6.7%	25.0%	48.6%	26.4%
Male	31.8%	59.1%	9.1%	28.6%	47.6%	23.8%
Female	39.1%	56.5%	4.3%	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Year 9	19.6%	58.7%	21.7%	-	-	-
Male	20.8%	50.0%	29.2%	-	-	-
Female	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	-	-	-
Not given	40.4%	45.5%	14.1%	13.2%	70.3%	16.5%
Male	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	12.5%	64.3%	23.2%
Female	39.5%	53.5%	7.0%	14.3%	80.0%	5.7%
Overall	36.6%	50.0%	13.4%	23.7%	59.9%	16.3%

Hypothesis Three: Pupils' use of the peer support scheme will increase

It was hypothesised that over time pupils' use of the service would increase. Pupils were asked both about their own use and their awareness of other pupils' use. In both waves they were asked if they knew anybody (not including themselves) they thought might like to use peer support, and if they thought they would like to use it, and in the second wave they were also asked if they had used it.

A small number of pupils said they had not used it but then answered questions about their experience of using it. In most of these cases it was clear from their answers that they were not answering these items sensibly, and in other cases it was unclear whether they had used it or not. Therefore all of these cases were excluded from analyses relating to pupils' own use of the scheme.

Table 8.11 summarises pupil responses to whether people they knew had used it. It can be seen that the proportion who knew someone who had used peer support in

wave two, 31.8%, was slightly higher than the proportion who had thought they knew someone who might use it in wave one, 26.9%. A 2x2 chi-square, with the two yes categories combined, was however, non-significant, $\chi^2 (1, n=534) = 1.50, p=.221$. This appears to reflect a greater percentage of year 7 pupils knowing someone who had used it, with nearly half answering yes. Slightly fewer year 8s in wave two, 22%, knew someone who had used it than thought they would in wave one.

In wave one a greater proportion of male pupils in both year 7 and 9 thought they knew someone who might use it, but the vast majority of female pupils answered yes in year 8. However, in wave two, proportions who knew someone who had used it were about equal for both years 7 and 8.

Table 8.12 shows the proportions of pupil responses regarding their own use of peer support. In wave one, around a third of pupils thought they might use it in future and this decreased to around a quarter of pupils in wave two. The proportion who had used it in wave two was actually much lower however, only just over 6% had used it once or more.

This pattern was true for both year 7 and 8 pupils, though year 7 pupils were somewhat more likely to say they might use it and slightly more year 7s actually had used it in wave two. Initially in years 8 and 9, a greater proportion of female pupils thought they would use it than males, with this reversed in year 7. By wave two, the gender divide in year 8 had gone but for year 7 the pattern had swapped, and more females than males thought they would use it. In actuality though, for both years slightly more female pupils reported using the scheme.

Overall, there is some support for this hypothesis. The proportion of pupils who knew someone who had used peer support was higher in wave two than the proportion who thought they knew someone who would use it in wave one. However, the proportion who thought they might use it actually decreased and level of reported use in wave two was very low. Peer support use, and knowledge of someone else using it, was somewhat higher for year 7s, the main school year targeted by the scheme.

Table 8.11: Percentages of pupils who answered if they knew one or more people who might use the scheme (wave one) and who had used the scheme (wave two). Given the low numbers who gave positive responses, actual pupil numbers are given in brackets

School Year	Study Wave					
	One			Two		
	Yes, more than 1 person	Yes, 1 person	No	Yes, more than 1 person	Yes, 1 person	No
Year 7	18.8% (12)	9.4% (6)	71.9% (46)	34.6% (36)	13.5% (14)	51.9% (54)
Male	19.4% (7)	11.1% (4)	69.4% (25)	32.7% (18)	14.5% (8)	52.7% (29)
Female	17.9% (5)	7.1% (2)	75.0% (21)	36.7% (18)	12.2% (16)	51.0% (25)
Year 8	10.9% (5)	17.4% (8)	71.7% (33)	11.0% (8)	11.0% (8)	78.1% (57)
Male	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	90.5% (19)	9.3% (4)	11.6% (5)	79.1% (34)
Female	16.0% (4)	28.0% (7)	56.0% (14)	13.3% (4)	10.0% (3)	76.7% (23)
Year 9	6.4% (3)	10.6% (5)	83% (39)	-	-	-
Male	8.3%(2)	12.5% (3)	79.2% (19)	-	-	-
Female	4.5% (1)	9.1% (2)	86.4% (19)	-	-	-
Not given	14.6% (15)	15.5% (16)	69.9% (72)	13.4% (13)	8.2% (8)	78.4% (76)
Male	18.3% (11)	10.0% (6)	71.7% (43)	13.3% (8)	5.0% (3)	81.7% (49)
Female	9.5% (4)	23.8% (10)	66.7% (28)	13.5% (5)	13.5% (5)	73.0% (27)
Overall	13.5% (35)	13.5% (35)	73.1% (190)	20.8% (57)	10.9% (30)	68.2% (187)

Table 8.12: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who answered if they thought they might use the scheme

School Year	Study Wave								
	One			Two			Two		
	Do you think you might use it in future?			Have you used it?					
	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No
Year 7	17.7% (11)	24.2% (15)	58.1% (36)	13.0% (12)	22.8% (21)	64.1% (59)	4.3% (4)	2.2% (2)	93.5% (87)
Male	23.5% (8)	26.5% (9)	50.0% (17)	7.7% (4)	21.2% (11)	71.2% (37)	3.8% (2)	1.9% (1)	94.3% (50)
Female	10.7% (3)	21.4% (6)	67.9% (19)	8.0% (10)	25.0% (10)	55.0% (22)	5.0% (2)	2.5% (1)	92.5% (37)
Year 8	0% (0)	26.2% (11)	73.8% (31)	5.6% (4)	11.3% (8)	83.1% (59)	1.4% (1)	2.7% (2)	95.9% (70)
Male	0% (0)	15.0% (3)	85.0% (17)	4.9% (2)	12.2% (5)	82.9% (34)	0% (0)	2.4% (1)	97.6% (41)
Female	0% (0)	36.4% (8)	63.6% (14)	6.7% (2)	10.0% (3)	83.3% (25)	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	93.5% (29)
Year 9	0% (0)	31.0% (13)	69.0% (29)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	0% (0)	18.2% (4)	81.8% (18)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	0% (0)	47.4% (9)	52.6% (10)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not given	7.2% (7)	25.8% (25)	67.0% (65)	4.5% (4)	18.2% (16)	77.3% (68)	4.4% (4)	3.3% (3)	92.2% (83)
Male	5.6% (3)	16.7% (9)	77.8% (42)	5.7% (3)	9.4% (5)	84.9% (45)	7.3% (4)	5.5% (3)	87.3% (48)
Female	9.5% (4)	38.1% (16)	52.4% (22)	2.9% (1)	31.4% (11)	65.7% (23)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (35)
Overall	7.4% (18)	26.3% (24)	66.3% (161)	8.0% (20)	17.9% (45)	74.1% (186)	3.5% (9)	2.7% (7)	93.8% (240)

Hypothesis Four: Pupils who use the peer support service will receive some benefit from doing this

It was hypothesised that the pupils who did access the peer support help would have a positive experience in that it would benefit them. Unfortunately, as in Case Study One, the low proportion of pupils who had used the scheme meant that this hypothesis could not be formally tested. Pupils who said they had used it in wave two were asked if it had helped them and if they would use it again. Given the low numbers these responses are not broken down by gender and school year, and no statistical analyses could be performed. However, the descriptive data and qualitative data provide some indications as to whether pupil users did receive any benefit.

As seen in Table 8.13 just over half of users found the scheme had helped them, with most saying it had helped them a lot.

Table 8.13: Proportions of pupil users who said the scheme had helped them a lot, a bit or that it had not

Study Wave	Did the scheme help		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a bit	No
Two	34.4% (11)	21.9% (7)	43.8% (14)

Table 8.14 shows that just under half of users said they would use it again, with under a third being unsure and just under a quarter saying no.

Table 8.14: Proportions of pupil users who would use the scheme again

Study Wave	Would use the scheme in future		
	Yes	Not sure	No
Two	48.4% (15)	29.0% (9)	22.6% (7)

Pupil users were also able to write open comments on their experience of using the scheme. Only two pupils answered this question (comments which indicated the pupil did not wish to answer the open question were excluded) and these are shown in Table 8.15. One answer is clearly positive, but the other suggests that the peer supporters do not know how to help pupils who go to them.

Table 8.15: A summary of comments written in wave two by pupils who had used the peer support scheme (spelling and grammatical errors are participants' own)

School Year	Gender	User's comment	Was scheme helpful?	Would use scheme again?
7	F	It is great.	Yes, a lot	Yes
8	M	Can you help me and everyone because they will not know what to do	Yes, a lot	Yes

Interviews with pupil users also revealed more about their experiences. The three users interviewed in wave two had been chosen for the mentoring part of the scheme, and had been told they had been randomly chosen. All three reported feeling a little nervous before going, but this appeared to ease off after the first mentoring session. For all it had been enjoyable but only one out of the three would want to continue being mentored. The other two expressed the sense that the experience had been okay but that they as an individual did not need it. One felt that it had changed them a little but could not express how, and all three suggested that peer mentoring could benefit pupils with problems and explicitly mentioned bullied pupils.

I think like, they've done a good job because if someone is getting bullied they can come to a peer mentor... - Pupil User Three

A benefit for two of the users was the social relationship with their peer mentor; they said they now said hi to them in school. However, as shown in the below quote, one of these pupils suggested that their strong relationship with their mentor was unusual and others had not got along with their mentor as well.

My peer mentor she was like nicer than usual. I was talking to other people, they saw me and my peer mentor were talking and really getting on. And they didn't get on as well with theirs. - Pupil User Two

Something that seemed to limit their enjoyment and possible benefit was the booklet given to the mentor-mentee pairs; there were suggestions that some of the

activities were too childish and not engaging enough. One user also said that the computer room where the sessions occurred was not comfortable enough, and meant that other people could hear your conversations.

I can't explain it but comfortable rooms so people can feel like they can express themselves. So they don't just look at the room and see walls and feel sad. – Pupil User Two

Trust was an issue for another, who expressed the sense that they did not want to fully open themselves up to the mentor.

It's like, like basically you just keep yourself to yourself. – Pupil User Three

However, all seemed to find talking to an older pupil okay, and two suggested that for some pupils this would be better than talking to a teacher.

Peer supporters also spoke about benefits for users in focus groups. Some suggested that the pupils they mentored had become more open across the sessions, but noted that the mentees were quiet during the party held at the end – possibly because they were not used to being in the group rather than pairs. They also reported that some pupils had initially used the peer listening service to get help with homework – though some felt this was seen by pupils as an easy option.

Apart from, just like an easy way to get homework done. Like, just getting them to do it for you. – Peer Supporter Three, Wave One, Focus Group One

Few pupils used it for bigger problems but peer supporters clearly felt there were potential benefits; that it had the potential to make the school more peaceful, to make pupils more confident, to help pupils with problems like bullying – particularly those who found it difficult to talk to a teacher. It was seen as especially helpful for year 7s, who may be struggling with transitioning to secondary school. Peer supporters also felt that year 7s had been the most responsive when they visited tutor groups.

I think 7s seemed to enjoy it. And 8s less and 9s lesser. – Peer Supporter Two, Wave One, Focus Group Two

Although this hypothesis could not be formally tested, the descriptive and qualitative data provide mixed support for the idea that pupil users received some benefit from the scheme. Around half of the users said it had helped them and about half said they would use it again. Users' comments on the questionnaires and in interviews are also divided. Interviewed pupils suggested that mentoring had been enjoyable but would be more beneficial for pupils who were having problems such as bullying. However, the social relationship with the peer mentor was a potential benefit. Peer mentors saw a little change in mentees, but largely spoke of potential rather than realised benefits for pupils in general.

Hypothesis Five: Pupils' experiences of school bullying will not significantly alter

It was hypothesised that the peer support scheme would not lead to pupils' experiences of school bullying significantly changing. The Anti-Bullying Alliance Children and Young People's questionnaire included items on whether pupils had been bullied at school in the last 12 months, when the bullying last happened, what types of bullying happened, who they had told and what the outcome was. However, not all aspects of this hypothesis could be formally tested; due to low numbers statistical analyses could not be run on the types of bullying pupil experienced, and only limited analyses could be run on who they had reported the bullying to.

A small number of pupils replied that they had not been bullied but then went on to answer questions about their bullying experience. These questionnaires were scrutinised and if it appeared that the remainder of the questionnaire had been answered coherently, it was assumed they had experienced bullying and their answer was amended. However, if it appeared that pupils had not answered the questionnaire sensibly throughout, or if it was unclear then they were excluded from these analyses.

Table 8.16 displays the proportions of pupils who reported having been bullied at school in the last 12 months. A logistic regression was performed with the yes, a lot and yes, a little categories collapsed. Study wave, school year (year 7 and year 8) and gender were entered as covariates, and interaction effects included for wave and gender, and wave and school year. Overall, the model was non-significant, $\chi^2(5) = 4.11, p = .534$. No significant covariate effects or interactions were found. It can be seen from the data that in both waves just over a fifth of pupils had been bullied. In both waves year 7s reported the greatest amount of bullying. For years 7 and 8 there was a slight trend for a greater proportion of male pupils to report being bullied, whereas more female pupils had been bullied in year 9.

Table 8.16: Percentages of female and male pupils in each school year, and pupils overall, who had experienced school bullying in the last 12 months

School Year	Study Wave					
	One			Two		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Year 7	2.2%	22.2%	75.6%	1.9%	22.6%	75.5%
Male	0%	25.0%	75.0%	2.4%	24.7%	72.9%
Female	5.9%	17.6%	76.5%	1.4%	20.0%	78.6%
Year 8	4.3%	15.1%	80.6%	1.4%	16.2%	82.4%
Male	3.8%	18.9%	77.4%	1.1%	17.2%	81.6%
Female	5.0%	10.0%	85.0%	1.8%	14.5%	83.6%
Year 9	2.2%	18.0%	79.8%	-	-	-
Male	2.4%	16.7%	81.0%	-	-	-
Female	2.1%	19.1%	78.7%	-	-	-
Not given	0%	100%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%
Male	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Female	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Overall	2.9%	18.7%	78.4%	1.7%	19.7%	78.6%

Table 8.17 summarises when pupils said they had last been bullied: in the last week, month, term or last 12 months. In both waves pupils most reported that the bullying last happened in the last 12 months, followed by the last week. Year 9s reported being bullied in the last term or 12 months most often. In wave one year 7s most often reported being bullied in the last week, followed by the last 12 months whereas this had reversed in wave two, and the opposite pattern was true for year 8s. No clear trends can be seen for gender.

Both the percentages and actual numbers of pupils are shown, and it is clear that when the numbers are divided by year and gender the numbers are too small to run a meaningful regression including these terms. Therefore a linear regression was run, given that there was an underlying scale for the variable of when pupils had last been bullied. Wave was included as the only independent variable. This was non-significant, $B = -0.32 (.216)$, $p > .05$.

Pupils were also asked what type of bullying they had experienced, with the responses summarised in Tables 7.18 and 7.19. Given that pupils could select more than one form, it was not possible to run a regression encompassing all of this data. Breaking numbers down by school year and gender also meant numbers were too low to run logistic regressions on each form of bullying.

Trends can be seen within the descriptive data. In both waves verbal bullying was most reported, with physical and indirect forms second and third most common. Across the school years, males reported greater physical bullying, and females largely reported greater verbal and physical bullying. Racist bullying increased with school years, but there were no other clear trends for school year for the other forms of bullying.

Table 8.17: Summary of bullied pupils' responses as to when the bullying last happened, overall and divided by school year and gender

School Year	Study Wave							
	One				Two			
	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last 12 months
Year 7	39.1%	17.4%	17.4%	26.1%	21.1%	23.7%	21.1%	34.2%
	(9)	(4)	(4)	(6)	(8)	(9)	(8)	(13)
Male	37.5%	18.8%	6.2%	37.5%	20.8%	25.0%	12.5%	41.7%
	(6)	(3)	(1)	(6)	(5)	(6)	(3)	(10)
Female	42.9%	14.3%	42.9%	0%	21.4%	21.4%	35.7%	21.4%
	(3)	(1)	(3)		(3)	(3)	(5)	(3)
Year 8	25.0%	20.0%	15.0%	40.0%	37.5%	16.7%	20.8%	25.0%
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(8)	(9)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Male	15.4%	23.1%	23.1%	38.5%	40.0%	13.3%	13.3%	33.3%
	(2)	(3)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(2)	(2)	(5)
Female	42.9%	14.3%	0%	42.9%	33.3%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%
	(3)	(1)		(3)	(3)	(2)	(3)	(1)
Year 9	15.8%	21.1%	31.6%	31.6%	-	-	-	-
	(3)	(4)	(6)	(6)				
Male	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	33.3%	-	-	-	-
	(2)	(1)	(3)	(3)				
Female	10.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	-	-	-	-
	(1)	(3)	(3)	(3)				
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	27.4%	19.4%	21.0%	32.3%	27.4%	21.0%	21.0%	30.6%
	(17)	(12)	(13)	(20)	(17)	(13)	(13)	(19)

Table 8.18: Summary of the types of bullying pupils reported for pupils overall and by school year and gender for wave one – pupils could select more than one category

Study Wave						
One						
School Year	Physical	Verbal	In-direct	Cyber	Racist	Homo-phobic
Year 7	26.1% (6)	69.6% (16)	21.7% (5)	0% (0)	4.3% (1)	4.3% (1)
Male	37.5% (6)	68.8% (11)	18.8% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Female	0% (0)	71.4% (5)	28.6% (2)	0% (0)	14.3% (1)	14.3% (1)
Year 8	35.0% (7)	70.0% (14)	25.0% (5)	5.0% (1)	10.0% (2)	5.0% (1)
Male	53.8% (7)	61.5% (8)	15.4% (2)	0% (0)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)
Female	0% (0)	85.7% (6)	42.9% (3)	14.3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Year 9	10.0% (2)	80.0% (16)	30.0% (6)	0% (0)	15.0% (3)	0% (0)
Male	22.2% (2)	77.8% (7)	11.1% (1)	0% (0)	22.2% (2)	0% (0)
Female	0% (0)	81.8% (9)	45.5% (5)	0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0% (0)
Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	23.8% (15)	73.0% (46)	25.4% (16)	1.6% (1)	9.5% (6)	3.2% (2)

Table 8.19: Summary of the types of bullying pupils reported for pupils overall and by school year and gender for wave two – pupils could select more than one category

Study Wave						
Two						
School Year	Physical	Verbal	In-direct	Cyber	Racist	Homo-phobic
Year 7	42.1% (16)	52.6% (20)	31.6% (12)	2.6% (1)	10.5% (4)	0% (0)
Male	43.5% (10)	56.5% (13)	26.1% (6)	0% (0)	17.4% (4)	0% (0)
Female	40.0% (6)	46.7% (7)	40.0% (6)	6.7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Year 8	41.7% (10)	66.7% (16)	29.2% (7)	4.2% (1)	12.5% (3)	4.2% (1)
Male	62.5% (10)	56.2% (9)	31.2% (5)	6.2% (1)	12.5% (2)	6.2% (1)
Female	0% (0)	87.5% (7)	25.0% (2)	0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0% (0)
Year 9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not given	100% (2)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)
Male	100% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Female	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)
Overall	43.8% (28)	57.8% (37)	31.2% (20)	4.7% (3)	12.5% (8)	3.1% (2)

Pupils were also able to say whether they had told anyone that they were being bullied, and could select more than one option. Table 8.20 shows the options pupils were given and the proportions who had reported the bullying in each wave. In both waves pupils most commonly reported having told no-one. In wave one a parent or carer was the most frequently report person pupils had told, followed closely by a member of school staff and a friend. In wave two, the person most told was a member of staff, followed by a friend then a parent/carers. At the start of the study, and peer support scheme, no pupils had told a peer supporter they were being bullied but encouragingly 4.4% (3) pupils had by wave two.

It was felt most important to look at the proportion of pupils who had not told anyone, but given low numbers it was decided not to explore school year or gender differences for this question. Therefore a 2x2 chi-square was run to see whether the amount of pupils who had told no-one changed over the study period. Although the proportion actually increased by about 10%, the result was non-significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.11, p > .05$.

Table 8.20: Percentages of bullied pupils who had told different people they had been bullied – pupils could select more than one response

Who did you tell?	Study Wave	
	One	Two
No-one	36.5% (23)	46.6% (31)
Member of staff	27.0% (17)	29.4% (20)
Friend	25.4% (16)	25.0% (17)
Older boy or girl	6.3% (4)	1.5% (1)
Parent/carers	28.6% (18)	19.1% (13)
Another adult	1.6% (1)	2.9% (2)
Brother or sister	9.5% (6)	5.9% (4)
Peer supporter	0% (0)	4.4% (3)
Helpline	0% (0)	0% (0)

Finally, pupils who had been bullied were asked what the outcome of the bullying had been, and could select more than one option. The proportions of pupils who gave each response are shown in Table 8.21. In both waves, the bullying was most reported to have stopped, either because something had been done or because it stopped anyway. Worryingly, for a small proportion in both waves something had been

done that made the bullying worse. Individual 2x2 chi-squares were run for each outcome, but no significant results were found.

Table 8.21: Percentages of bullied pupils who reported different outcomes of the bullying experience – pupils could select more than one answer

What happened?	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Something was done that stopped the bullying	24.1% (13)	33.3% (20)
Something was done that didn't stop the bullying	13.0% (7)	10.0% (6)
Something was done that made the bullying worse	5.6% (3)	5.0% (3)
Nothing was done but the bullying stopped anyway	38.9% (21)	41.7% (25)
Nothing was done and the bullying carried on	20.4% (11)	18.3% (11)

All pupils were also asked whether they had bullied anyone else in the last 12 months. Table 8.22 shows pupils' responses to whether they had bullied others a lot, a little or not at all. Most pupils had not bullied anyone, 8.6% had in wave one and this rose to just over 10% in wave two. In wave one, year 9s most reported bullying others, with numbers for years 7 and 8 very similar. In wave two, slightly more year 8s had bullied someone than year 7s. Generally, females reported bullying others less than males.

A logistic regression was performed with the yes, a lot and yes, a little categories combined, and wave, school year (years 7 and 8) and gender included as covariates. Interaction terms between wave and school year, and wave and gender were also included. Overall, the model was non-significant, $\chi^2(5) = 6.55$, $p < .005$, and no significant covariate effects or interaction effects were found.

Overall the hypothesis that pupils' experiences of bullying would not significantly alter was supported. The proportion of pupils who had been bullied was about a fifth in both study waves, and the time when this last happened did not change. Formal testing could not be conducted on the types of bullying experienced but descriptive data indicated that verbal, physical and indirect forms of bullying remained most common, though racist bullying increased. Although full statistical analyses could

not be run on who pupils reported bullying to, it was seen from the descriptive data that in both waves pupils were most likely to have told no-one, and bullying had stopped for over half of pupils. However, by wave two a small percentage had reported the bullying to a peer supporter. The proportion of pupils who were themselves bullies also remained the same.

Table 8.22: Percentages of pupils who said they had bullied someone else at school in the last 12 months, overall and divided by school year and gender

School Year	Study Wave					
	One			Two		
	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Year 7	0%	5.8%	94.2%	1.3%	11.2%	87.5%
Male	0%	7.4%	92.6%	2.4%	14.3%	83.3%
Female	0%	3.1%	96.9%	0%	7.4%	92.6%
Year 8	0%	6.7%	93.3%	0.7%	7.2%	92.1%
Male	0%	6.2%	93.8%	1.2%	7.1%	91.7%
Female	0%	7.3%	92.7%	0%	7.3%	92.7%
Year 9	0%	12.8%	87.2%	-	-	-
Male	0%	14.3%	85.7%	-	-	-
Female	0%	11.4%	88.6%	-	-	-
Not given	-	-	-	50.0%	0%	50%
Male	-	-	-	0%	0%	100%
Female	-	-	-	100%	0%	0%
Overall	0%	8.4%	91.6%	1.4%	9.2%	89.4%

Hypothesis Six: Pupils' perceptions of school climate will become more positive

It was hypothesised that over time students would develop more positive perceptions of school climate. Pupils completed eight items on perceptions of school climate, rated on a three point scale (Yes, usually; Yes, sometimes; No). These looked at sense of safety, school ethos, and relationships with staff and other students, e.g. 'Do you feel safe at school?'; 'Do you feel your school is happy and caring?'; 'Do you have good relationships with most teachers in your school?'

To confirm that these items formed a reliable school climate subscale Cronbach's Alpha was performed, showing high scale reliability of 0.77. Scale reliability did not increase if an item was deleted. Participants' scores on the school climate subscale were then calculated, with only those pupils who had answered all eight items being included. Overall pupils had high scores on the school climate subscale, indicating that they held positive perceptions of school climate. From a possible total score of 16, the mean school climate score in wave one was 11.92 (SD = 2.756) and in wave two the mean score was 12.22 (SD = 2.937). Mean scores for the two waves are shown for school year and gender in Table 8.23.

The effects of study wave, participants' school year (years 7 and 8 only) and gender on school climate scores were analysed using an ANOVA. There was a significant main effect of school year on participants' school climate ratings, $F(1, 235) = 11.26, p \leq .001$. Pupils in year 7 ($M = 13.05, SD = 2.40$) had more positive perceptions of school climate than pupils in year 8 ($M = 11.82, SD = 2.91$).

There was a non-significant main effect of study wave, $F(1, 235) = 0.04, p = .836$, showing that pupil perceptions of school climate did not change over time. There was also a non-significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 235) = 0.001, p = .973$. There were no significant interaction effects between study wave and participants' school year, $F(1, 235) = 0.70, p = .403$, between study wave and participants' gender, $F(1, 235) = 0.42, p = .517$, or between participants' school year and gender, $F(1, 235) = 2.34, p = .127$. There was also a non-significant three-way interaction between the three variables, $F(1, 235) = 2.13, p = .146$. The lack of significant interaction effects indicates that pupils in year 7 had more positive perceptions than those in year 8, regardless of whether they were male or female and which study wave it was.

However, it should be noted that Levene's test for this analysis was significant, $F(7, 235) = 2.24, p = .032$, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity of variance (that the variances in the different groups are equal) was not met.

Interviews and focus groups with peer supporters, pupil users and non-users, and staff co-ordinators all indicated that perceptions of school climate were largely

positive. The school was seen as a good school, where staff and pupils generally had positive relationships. However, no impact of peer support upon the school climate was expressed.

Overall, this hypothesis was not supported as pupils' perceptions of school climate started and remained quite positive.

Table 8.23: Mean scores of pupils on the school climate scale, shown for each school year and gender for the two study waves. Standard deviations are shown in brackets

	Study Wave	
	One	Two
School Year		
Year 7	12.84 (2.47)	13.19 (2.35)
Year 8	12.03 (2.74)	11.70 (3.02)
Year 9	11.74 (3.07)	-
Not given	11.34 (2.67)	11.64 (3.18)
Gender		
Male	12.07 (2.65)	11.95 (3.10)
Female	11.80 (2.89)	12.58 (2.69)
Overall	11.92 (2.80)	12.22 (2.94)

Hypothesis Seven: Pupils acting as peer supporters will benefit from acting in this role, specifically in terms of developing social skills

It was hypothesised that pupils who took on the role of peer supporter would benefit from their experience. This hypothesis was tested using the Social Competence questionnaire, consisting of three measures of self-esteem, social skills and conflict resolution skills. Peer supporters and a tutor group in the same school year completed this questionnaire, to look at whether peer supporters' social competence differed from that of controls.

These pupils completed the ten item Rosenberg (1965) Self-esteem Scale in each study wave (Cronbach's alphas were high, .79 in wave one and .81 in wave two). Individuals' scores on the items were summed for each wave, giving a measure of their self-esteem; the higher the score (maximum of 30), the higher the individual's self-esteem. Nine peer supporters completed this scale in both waves, and twenty-one non-peer supporters. Table 8.24 displays the mean self-esteem score for the two groups in the two study waves. It is clear that all pupils had quite high self-esteem, having overall

scores of 21.57 and 23.50 out of 30 for the two waves. Peer supporters had very marginally higher scores than controls initially, but mean scores in wave two were very close – although both groups had increased slightly.

An ANOVA was performed, with self-esteem score as a within-subjects factor, and peer supporter status as a between-subjects factor. There was a main effect of study wave that approached significance, $F(1, 28) = 4.01, p = .055$. However the effect of peer supporter status was non-significant, $F(1, 28) = 0.40, p > .05$, and there was a non-significant interaction between the variables, $F(1, 28) = 0.64, p > .05$.

Table 8.24: Mean scores on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (out of 30) for peer supporters and controls, in each study wave. Standard deviations are shown in brackets

	Study Wave	
	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	
	One	Two
Peer Supporters (n=9)	22.67 (2.55)	23.67 (3.46)
Controls (n=21)	21.10 (4.52)	23.45 (4.49)
Overall	21.57 (4.05)	23.50 (4.15)

Aspects of peer supporters' social psychological development were also compared with controls. Table 8.25 summarises mean scores on the four subscales used from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997), for peer supporters and controls at both time points. Cronbach's Alphas for each subscale are shown within the table, and were generally moderately high with the exception of low alphas for the Peer Problems scale. The numbers of pupils with valid data differed slightly across subscales, and so numbers are shown within the table. The mean scores for peer supporters and controls fell within the 'normal' range for each subscale, as defined by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scoring guidance. It can be seen that peer supporters generally scored slightly more positively on each subscale, and that scores for both peer supporters and controls tended to marginally improve from wave one to two. An ANOVA was run for each scale, including the subscale as a within-subjects factor and peer supporter status as a between-subjects factor. No significant effects were found for overall subscale means, peer supporter status or interactions.

Peer supporters' conflict resolution skills were also compared with controls'. Table 8.26 shows the mean scores for peer supporters and control pupils on the eight subscales of the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire. Cronbach's Alphas are shown for each subscale within the table and are moderate to high, except for a very low alpha in wave two for the Social Support scale. It can be seen that all tactics were used by pupils, to a fairly similar extent. ANOVAS were performed for each subscale, with the tactic as a within-subjects factor and peer supporter status as a between-subjects factor. The outcomes indicated that peer supporters' use of conflict resolution tactics did not differ from control pupils' use; there were no significant effects for peer supporter status or an interaction between this and the two time points.

As can be seen in Table 8.26, the tactic where peer supporters notably differed from controls was in the use of violence – peer supporters reported using this tactic less. However, this difference was not significant, $F(1, 28) = 3.51, p=.072$. Use of Persuasion as a tactic did significantly differ across the two time points, $F(1, 28) = 8.60, p<.01$, and it can be seen in the table that the overall mean score increased from 9.27 to 10.27. However, there was no difference between peer supporters and controls, nor an interaction.

The order of conflict resolution tactics in terms of frequency used was broadly similar for peer supporters and controls. In wave one peer supporters' top three most reported tactics were Compromise, Distraction and Social Support, and in wave two Compromise, Social Support and Persuasion. Quite similarly controls reported using Compromise, Persuasion and Distraction most in waves one and two. Both groups reported using Violence the least in both waves. For peer supporters Anger was the second least common method in both waves, but Anger was slightly more common for controls at third and fourth least common in the two waves.

Table 8.25: Mean scores on the individual subscales from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, for peer supporters and controls at both study waves. Standard deviations are shown in brackets and α indicates Cronbach's Alphas

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Subscale	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Emotional Symptoms	2.19 (2.04)	1.68 (1.64)
(Normal scores= 0-5; α = .70/.64)		
Peer Supporters (n=9)	1.89 (1.70)	0.89 (1.05)
Controls (n=22)	2.32 (2.19)	2.00 (1.75)
Conduct Problems	2.03 (1.60)	1.77 (1.73)
(Normal scores = 0-3; α = .45/.70)		
Peer Supporters (n=9)	1.44 (.90)	1.33 (1.0)
Controls (n=22)	2.27 (1.72)	1.95 (1.94)
Peer Problems	1.32 (1.11)	1.06 (.96)
(Normal scores = 0-3; α = .40/.30)		
Peer Supporters (n=8)	1.25 (1.30)	.88 (.99)
Controls (n=23)	1.35 (1.10)	1.13 (.97)
Prosocial	7.52 (1.71)	7.52 (2.05)
(Normal scores = 6-10; α = .61/.73)		
Peer Supporters (n=8)	8.12 (1.55)	8.38 (1.85)
Controls (n=23)	7.30 (1.74)	7.22 (2.10)

Table 8.26: Mean scores on the individual subscales from the Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire, for peer supporters and controls at both study waves. Standard deviations are shown in brackets and α indicates Cronbach's Alphas

Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire Subscale (maximum score of 16 on each scale)	Study Wave	
	One	Two
Persuasion ($\alpha = .62/.73$)	9.27 (2.41)	10.27 (2.70)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	8.22 (2.33)	9.89 (3.40)
Controls (n=21)	9.71 (2.35)	10.43 (2.44)
Compromise ($\alpha = .80/.65$)	11.59 (2.92)	11.48 (2.31)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	12.56 (2.60)	12.22 (2.20)
Controls (n=20)	11.15 (3.01)	11.15 (2.35)
Obliging ($\alpha = .71/.63$)	8.50 (2.45)	8.77 (2.30)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	8.78 (1.60)	9.67 (2.12)
Controls (n=21)	8.38 (2.80)	8.38 (2.30)
Social Support ($\alpha = .70/.20$)	9.73 (2.66)	9.83 (1.90)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	10.00 (2.65)	10.44 (1.60)
Controls (n=21)	9.62 (2.73)	9.57 (1.94)
Distraction ($\alpha = .45/.70$)	9.90 (2.35)	9.87 (2.60)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	10.33 (1.94)	9.67 (2.91)
Controls (n=21)	9.71 (2.53)	9.95 (2.50)
Avoidance ($\alpha = .53/.40$)	8.97 (2.50)	9.00 (2.13)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	8.22 (2.33)	8.89 (2.10)
Controls (n=21)	9.29 (2.51)	9.05 (2.20)
Anger ($\alpha = .55/.60$)	8.20 (2.31)	8.80 (2.35)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	7.67 (2.24)	8.11 (2.40)
Controls (n=21)	8.43 (2.40)	9.10 (2.34)
Violence ($\alpha = .84/.83$)	7.10 (3.20)	7.80 (3.30)
Peer Supporters (n=9)	5.33 (2.20)	6.56 (2.83)
Controls (n=21)	7.86 (3.30)	8.33 (3.40)

Qualitative work also provided information for this hypothesis. Peer supporters felt they developed communication skills through the training they received; specific skills mentioned were learning how to keep calm, ask the right questions and to use eye contact.

Learning how to speak to them. Without that training we wouldn't know how to speak to them, we'd tell them what to do not ask them. - Peer Supporter Three, Wave One, Focus Group One

The games used in the training were often mentioned as being helpful for their role – they reported using these to help when working with tutor groups.

And we used the training when we're going round the school as well. – Peer Supporter Three, Wave One, Focus Group One

Pupils said they became peer supporters to help people, and to benefit, i.e. to enhance their CV, but for some the experience did not live up to this as following training few pupils used the listening service.

I expected there to be people, instead of just sitting there, bored. The good thing about it in a way is that when you're paired up with people you get to talk to people that you wouldn't usually talk to. – Peer Supporter Two, Wave One, Focus Group One

One reported that it had the negative effect of wasting their lunchtime when no-one came to see them.

Just wasting your lunchtime. Nobody comes. You're just sat there for 45 minutes for no reason. – Peer Supporter Two, Wave One, Focus Group One

However, the experience was beneficial in terms of developing new social relationships – with both the other peer mentors and the mentees they were later paired with.

Another benefit was having a position of privilege within the school and added responsibility. In wave one, pupils reported that it led to more positive attitudes from staff.

Something like that a teacher will think it's a good thing, it gives a good impression overall. – Peer Supporter Five, Wave One, Focus Group One

In wave two peer supporters reported that having peer mentor badges made them visible to pupils, but that staff could use the badges against them by threatening to take them away for things like wearing their uniform incorrectly.

It's bad though, the teachers use it to threaten you. If your uniform isn't up to scratch. If you don't do this, I'll take your badge off you, if you don't do that I'll take your badge. – Peer Supporter One, Wave Two

The staff co-ordinators felt that the experience was positive for the peer supporters, and that the training had helped them to develop communication skills. However in wave two the lead co-ordinator suggested that the lack of contact with pupils in the period where the listening service was not being used meant that these skills were not reinforced and that further training was needed. Interestingly, some pupils who were interviewed who had not used the scheme also suggested that peer support would benefit the peer supporters, helping to gain the maturity needed for when they became adults.

Overall, there is limited support for this hypothesis. Peer supporters did not significantly differ from controls in terms of self-esteem, social skills or use of conflict resolution skills, and did not show differences in these across the study period. However, qualitative work did indicate perceived gains in terms of communication and social skills, and in satisfaction gained from helping others.

Discussion

The hypotheses for this study were only partly supported. Pupil awareness of the peer support scheme did increase, but knowledge about the service and how to use it decreased. Pupils were divided as to whether they felt it was a good idea, and attitudes were not more positive by the second time point. Low rates of pupils had used the service by wave two. The hypothesis on whether pupil users benefited could not be formally tested but some did appear to benefit from the support, and staff and pupils felt there were great potential benefits for pupil users. Peer supporters also had some benefits from the scheme, but did not measurably advance on aspects of social competence. The hypothesis that peer support would not significantly impact upon pupil experiences of school bullying was supported. There was also no impact upon

pupil perceptions of school climate, with pupils throughout indicating that their school was a good school.

Observational findings put the above into context, and qualitative information within the open research question identified a range of factors which influenced scheme development. These findings will be compared with those from the previous case study in the next chapter, and fuller consideration given to the implications for peer support practice in schools.

The limited impact of the peer support scheme may be explained by a number of reasons. The school studied was a 'good' school prior to peer support, as indicated by the most recent Ofsted report and verbal reports from staff and pupils. A range of avenues of support were already in place for pupils, and it was felt that relationships within the school were generally positive. This meant that there was limited scope for peer support to have a positive impact upon the school, particularly upon perceptions of school climate. It also brought into question how great a need there was for the scheme, although it did help fulfil the school's role as a training school.

The change in scheme focus partway through the study had a clear impact. It is not surprising that pupil knowledge of how to access support from the scheme decreased by the second time point, given that the way pupils received help had in the main changed. In these first six months the scheme was evolving in a trial and error process, where it adapted to pupil needs. The school was finding out what approach worked best, and the initial peer listening approach had been largely unsuccessful. The one-to-one mentoring approach was considered more effective, and changes were being planned to improve it further. It seems likely that the full impact of the scheme would be seen once the best mode of support had been established. Indeed, the willingness to adapt may mean that in the long-term the scheme has as much success as possible.

An original aim of the scheme was to help deal with school bullying but it headed towards helping year 7s with transitioning instead. This meant that during the study period the scheme was not particularly focused upon tackling bullying, making it less likely to have significant impact upon this area.

Bullying presented as a moderate problem within the school. Pupils reported that verbal bullying was high compared with physical bullying, and indirect bullying was also reported by a high proportion. Across the study around a fifth of pupils had been bullied, which is lower than the overall rate of 28.8% found in the most recent Tellus survey for England (DCSF, 2010). Bullying in Western countries usually involves older pupils bullying younger ones (Craig et al., 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 1999) but

interestingly this was not seen in this school. As reported elsewhere, boys did appear to be involved in physical bullying more than girls (e.g. Stassen Berger, 2007).

Some pupils did feel that peer support could help with bullying, with pupils who were interviewed indicating that it could provide social support rather than reduce levels. Bullying support was mentioned by all target pupils interviewed as a potential scheme benefit. Positively for most victims the bullying had stopped, either because something was done or because it stopped on its own. However, most had not told anyone about the bullying. By wave two a small number of pupils had told a peer supporter about bullying, which was encouraging. If the scheme continues to become more effective this rate may rise and indeed, staff hoped that mentored pupils may tell their mentors about bullying.

Levels of bullying and when it last occurred did not significantly alter. This fits with findings from some previous studies that peer support did not reduce bullying (e.g. Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Houlston & Smith, 2009). It did appear that there was potential for it to offer support to victims however, in the long-term.

In the surveys pupils who had used the scheme were divided as to whether they felt it had helped and if they would use it again. Pupils who had been mentored reported in interviews that the experience had been enjoyable but that they had not changed because they had not needed mentoring. Pupils who had not used peer support thought it was a good idea but in focus groups said it did not benefit them as they did not need it yet. Therefore it is clear that targeting peer support at the correct pupils is essential for potential benefits to be realised. Staff had recognised that some pupils had been chosen for mentoring for help with personal organisation rather than for issues the scheme could actually help with.

As identified in the discussion for Case Study One, more rigorous testing of benefits for pupil users could be achieved by examining impact on specific areas, such as perceptions of social support, before and after support was accessed. This would strengthen the findings but is practically difficult in a study of a drop-in service where it is not known which pupils will access peer support, how many times and for what reasons. For a peer mentoring scheme, as this school developed during the study, it would however be possible to investigate the impact upon pupil users in this way. If it had been possible to extend the study period I would have evaluated the impact of the mentoring service upon the next group of mentees by administering quantitative measures in the first and last mentoring session, and at a set time afterwards.

In this study, unlike in Case Study One, quantitative measures were administered to peer supporters and a group of matched controls. These did not reveal

any significant differences between the two groups before pupils became peer supporters and six months later. Although these null findings may be partly explained by the shorter study time scale, there are also some possible limitations of the measures used. The record of the peer supporters identifying numbers for the social competence questionnaire was lost leading to the questionnaires from wave one and two being matched using handwriting. I am confident that having the matches checked by another researcher and then by the peer supporters themselves meant that the correct questionnaires were put together, but the threat to reliability must be acknowledged.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and the SDQ (Goodman, 1997) were selected to measure self-esteem and social psychological development largely due to their demonstrated reliability as measures with adolescents in past studies. However, the SDQ may not have been sensitive enough to detect small changes over time. All of the peer supporters and control group pupils scored in the 'normal' ranges of the measure in wave one. The SDQ may be better designed to detect large changes from clinical to normal levels, and not be sensitive enough to detect changes in young people within the 'normal' ranges.

The third measure used in the social competence questionnaire was the Coping with Disagreements questionnaire developed in Chapter Six. Although it was concluded that this instrument was sufficiently reliable to be used in Case Study Two, the need for some revision of the subscales and further piloting was also identified. It could be that this instrument was not sufficiently developed to be able to sensitively detect small differences.

In the findings related to the open research question there were clear practical factors which affected the scheme's impact and development. These included the lack of confidentiality offered by the chosen location, and the lack of signage for the area, the mentoring booklet not being pitched right for the first group of mentees, lack of time within school life to fit in peer support activities and the need to keep the peer supporters motivated. On the positive side, was support from senior management and some other staff members, having more than one co-ordinator and having co-ordinators with relevant experience and interest in pastoral care, and a structured process for selecting peer supporters. These factors reflect many of the practical factors identified from past literature in Chapter One, and I would consider this school to have the potential to overcome barriers due to key support from senior management and the staff's willingness to change the service as needed.

An interesting point is to consider how well the CHIPS training and service fit the aims and development of the scheme, given that the scheme changed tack after the training was provided. The training was very well received by peer supporters and staff perceived it as very useful for the pupils. An unexpected benefit for the peer supporters was being able to use games from the training with tutor groups of target pupils. This had not been the purpose of the activities, but suggested that CHIPS or other organisations may want to consider including ideas for activities peer supporters can run in their training.

Peer supporters developed skills in the training but these were not consolidated in the period after training because very few younger pupils used the listening service. When the approach changed to mentoring, communication skills were considered more essential, and the co-ordinators felt that further training was needed.

However, it was not felt that extra support was needed from CHIPS, partly because the co-ordinating staff had the experience and ability needed to provide further training. Materials and information from CHIPS had been very helpful in the early stages of development but follow-up support had not been sought. The lead co-ordinator had felt though that being involved in the study, knowing the scheme was being looked at by an outside person, helped them to remain focused on it. Schools in the UK typically do not have such input from a researcher, and so ongoing support from an outside organisation could be more beneficial for them.

I would suggest that if an outside organisation is involved in helping a school develop peer support, at least one review of how it is progressing down the line would be helpful. Knowing that study data would be collected six months later was a push for the school, which could instead be provided by the knowledge that an outside organisation will be reviewing the service. Such a review could be especially useful for schools, such as this one, which have decided to change focus and need to review how well training actually met the current needs.

A limitation of this study was that, although it was longitudinal, it did not follow the peer support scheme beyond its initial period of development. Following the scheme for its first six months allowed me to explore the critical early stage of development, uncovering the factors which affected the course it took. However, I was not able to track the long-term impact of the mentoring programme which was instigated partway through the study period. During the study the scheme was still evolving, and practice being adapted, meaning that potential for impact upon the school was limited. It would have been interesting to revisit the scheme once the

practices involved were more established, to see whether a greater impact upon the school and pupils had occurred.

This case study was however an in-depth exploration of the early stages of scheme development. It explored potential impact for the target pupil population, upon bullying experiences and school climate perceptions, as well as impact upon specific pupils who had used the service. It also considered the experience of being a peer supporter, and benefits it may have for those pupils. It was also able to look at pupil awareness and knowledge of the scheme over time, and link this to scheme development.

An important strength was the use of mixed methodology, as advocated by past literature (e.g. Ellis et al., 2009). Using both pupil surveys and qualitative work with pupils and staff enabled me to take an in-depth at the scheme. Qualitative work put the survey results into context, and helped me to identify reasons for the low pupil use and knowledge of the scheme.

As in Case Study One, the null findings were disappointing but taken in the context revealed, the change in scheme focus and the practical factors which limited effectiveness, evidence of greater impact would have been surprising. In this case study it is difficult to be sure to what extent the null findings were due to the factors limiting the scheme's effectiveness, to what extent to the change in focus, and to what extent to there simply not being sufficient time for peer support to have an impact.

However, the findings from this case study are still useful in terms of signposting important factors for successful development of a scheme, listed above. This reinforces the need for schools setting up peer support to consider such practical factors and to continually monitor how well the service is going is needed. Rather than having a rigid mindset for what the peer support scheme will be, a willingness to adapt it to respond to pupils' needs is identified as a positive factor. Ensuring peer supporters have the necessary training and remain motivated is also important.

Many of the issues identified in this study support those found in the previous case study and, as concluded before, further longitudinal research into peer support would consolidate understanding of these factors. In particular mixed methodology case studies would provide the most in-depth contribution to understanding of peer support.

Summary

This chapter presented a six month case study in a UK secondary school of a peer listening scheme which shifted to a peer mentoring scheme. The overall aims were to

explore the impact of peer support and the fit between the training, scheme aims and design. Mixed methodology was used. Pupils were surveyed on knowledge of, use of, and attitudes towards peer support, and bullying experiences. Co-ordinating staff, peer supporters, and pupils who had and had not used peer support were interviewed individually or in focus groups.

Overall, findings showed little impact of peer support upon pupils' experiences of bullying and perceptions of school climate. Pupil awareness of peer support increased, but knowledge about the scheme did not. A small proportion of pupils used the scheme, and did report benefits from this and some would use it again. Peer supporters enjoyed their work and personal benefits were found in qualitative data but not quantitatively. The scheme changed quite significantly across the study period and key factors that were important in its development were identified. The CHIPS training and support was well perceived and fitted well with the scheme's needs, despite the change in its focus.

Chapter Nine: Comparison of Findings from Case Studies One and Two

Introduction

In this chapter I compare the findings from Case Studies One and Two, presented in the previous two chapters. The aim is to consider what implications the findings have for peer support practice in general.

Although the two case studies were of different lengths, 18 and six months, they were intended to be as comparable as possible. Both schools were English state secondary schools which used the CHIPS programme, with training for peer supporters held just before the study began. The lead co-ordinators of the peer support scheme were both pastoral members of staff. A primary aim of both schemes was to provide additional support for pupils, with a secondary aim being to impact upon bullying – though this aim was more specific in the Case Study Two school. Each school initially created a peer listening service where pupils in year 10 helped pupils in the lower school years. Peer supporters went through an application process in both schools.

As the schemes developed, practices in each school evolved. Thus at the end of the study periods the services were not identical, rather they reflected the need for peer support to be adapted to individual school contexts. However, the findings may be compared on a number of points in order to inform good practice.

It is interesting to compare how the two schemes developed across time, and note common issues which arose. I also compare the impact of peer support in the two schools upon whole school outcomes, bullying and school climate, and upon users and peer supporters. In both studies a number of key practical factors emerged, which are also compared. Finally, implications for practice of peer support generally are suggested.

The nature of peer support development within a school

Multiple approaches

Although both schools set out to run a peer listening service, in reality peer supporters engaged in a range of activities. In Case Study One peer supporters were also involved in peer education, visiting primary schools, were attached to tutor groups and were posted to various school areas. In Case Study Two there was a formal shift to peer mentoring, though in theory peer listening was continued. This evolvement into multiple simultaneous approaches fits previous findings for the UK where it was found that the

longer schemes were running, the more likely they were to use more than one method (Cowie et al., 2002; Houlston et al., 2009).

Low pupil use

These studies suggest one reason the use of multiple approaches may occur: low initial use. Both schools found that relatively few pupils accessed listening support and peer supporters became demotivated. This may suggest that the schools did not select the most appropriate support method for their pupils initially. School staff surveyed pupil needs prior to the scheme but this was more to check that support was needed. Better guidance for schools on how to select the method could therefore be useful.

Pupil awareness and knowledge

There was some suggestion that low use was due to low awareness. The need to continually advertise a scheme has been highlighted in the past - particularly for schools running drop-in services (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; MBF, 2011). However, in both schools there was high awareness of the scheme amongst pupils at the start, and this awareness increased across time. Staff and peer supporters did a lot of advertising and awareness raising e.g. through assemblies, posters, work with tutor groups and business cards for target pupils. The findings suggest that awareness and knowledge of how to access the service are different things however; levels of understanding of how to use the service for themselves or a friend was not as high, and knowledge of who the peer supporters were was much lower.

Pupil attitudes

The studies indicate that it is pupil attitudes towards peer support which are important. In both schools pupils were divided as to whether it was a good idea, with no change across time. Qualitative work suggested that mistrust of the service was a fairly common attitude. Peer supporters were in an older year, and some pupils were concerned that they were likely to tell others their concerns. Having peer supporters in an older year seems to be a barrier to some, especially given that in the UK bullying normally involves older pupils bullying younger ones. The CHIPS training did cover the confidentiality policy and how to make this clear to users, and this part of the training was highlighted as very useful. The difficulty seems to be conveying this to the larger school population.

Despite mixed attitudes towards peer support, it was seen in the qualitative data that pupils were positive about being supported by peers. Peer supporters and target

pupils reported that it can be easier to talk to someone of a similar age, with shared experiences, than a teacher. This affirms the core rationale for peer support, that support by pupils for pupils offers a valuable alternative source of pastoral care.

Adaptability

What was particularly shown by these studies was the need for schools to be flexible and able to adapt, if the service is not as successful as hoped. From the findings I would argue that schools' ability to adapt is vital and linked to whether the service thrives or not. In Case Study One the lead co-ordinator understood the issues and had ideas for changes, but seemed unable to adjust as fast as would be useful. The second school by contrast changed focus very quickly and this was perceived to be more successful.

The impact of peer support

Whole school environment

Not too surprisingly given the above, there was a lack of quantitative evidence that peer support had an impact upon the whole school environment. In both, pupil perceptions of school climate began and remained high - suggesting that in schools where climate is already good little impact may be expected. This is supported by the suggestion by Baginsky (2004) that the existing school context determines how much measurable impact peer mediation can have.

In Case Study One there was an initial decrease in bullying levels, though it is not possible to conclude that this is directly attributable to peer support only, and in Case Study Two no change was observed. Neither the nature of bullying experiences nor levels of pupils identifying as bullies altered. My findings fit with previous studies where a decrease in the amount of bullying was not observed in UK schools with peer support (e.g. Houlston & Smith, 2009; Cowie & Olafson, 2000; MBF, 2011).

Clearly these findings reflect the low use; if few pupils use the service then direct impact upon the student body has to be low. It also suggests that the presence of peer supporters did not act as a deterrent for bullying in itself, nor that the existence of peer support, a display that their school cares, improved climate perceptions. I feel the low impact upon whole school outcomes also reflects scheme design. Peer counselling by its nature involves work with bullying victims not bullies, with individuals not the whole student body. Schools, peer support organisations, and funders thus need to be

realistic about what a peer support scheme can achieve. Hoped for outcomes and scheme design must be congruent for peer support to be effective.

Benefits for users

What these schemes did achieve was a positive impact upon individual pupils. Users largely had good experiences, though not all would use it again. In particular users were helped with bullying and friendships issues, showing that peer support can especially improve interpersonal relationships. In Case Study Two mentored pupils said it was a good experience, but that it had not changed them. This was due to mis-targeting of the service to pupils who did not need help in the areas that mentoring could help with.

Benefits for peer supporters

Peer supporters also benefited from involvement. All were very enthusiastic about the role and largely found it a good experience. Qualitative data in both studies indicated benefits. Peer supporters and staff perceived skills gains, particularly for communication, especially as a result of the CHIPS training. The sense of responsibility and usefulness for life and their CV were also appreciated. The experience of helping others, and seeing that they had the power to make a difference, was highly positive.

However, there was a lack of measured improvements upon aspects of social competence in Case Study Two. Caution must be taken then in considering the benefits gained by peer supporters; perceived benefits, whilst good, may not mean actual improvements occurred.

These outcomes reflect the findings from the qualitative pilot work with a group of peer mentors in Chapter Five to a limited extent. Skills gain and the enjoyment of helping others were seen in all three studies. The central finding in Chapter Five was that the role contributed to the peer supporters' transition to adulthood, but this was not seen in the case studies. One possible explanation is the different pupil ages – peer supporters in the case studies were in year 10 whereas those in the pilot group were in the sixth-form, and thus developmentally closer to becoming adults.

Another reason may be the nature of their work. In the pilot I worked with peer mentors, who had long-term, one-to-one supportive relationships with younger pupils. In the case studies peer listening did not involve supporting individuals long-term, though some peer supporters did work with individuals several times. Low use also limited contact with pupils, affording less opportunity to personally develop through supporting others. It would be interesting to see whether peer supporters in Case Study

Two felt that the experience contributed to growing maturity in the long-term, following the switch to mentoring. One implication from my findings is therefore that different types of peer support may offer variable benefits for peer supporters.

Common factors influencing scheme effectiveness

In both case studies a range of practical factors were identified, which affected scheme effectiveness. A brief review of how the factors seen in both case studies fit with those identified in previous literature (summarised in Chapter One) is given below.

Choice of co-ordinators

In both case studies the selection of staff members to develop and run the scheme was seen as an important issue. The lead co-ordinator in both schools were pastoral members of staff – this appeared to work well as running the scheme fitted with the nature of their role and they had strong relationships with pupils. In Case Study One a teaching member of staff was initially a joint co-ordinator but despite her interest in the scheme this combination did not work well, due to her having less time to spend on the scheme and the lack of contact between the two co-ordinators. However, when the teaching member of staff left the school, the lead co-ordinator experienced an increased sense of isolation and desire for support. In Case Study Two, two support co-ordinators, one who was only involved in pastoral care and one member of teaching staff, were selected. Having a team of three was felt to work well, though it was seen that the teaching member of staff was less able to be involved in everything.

The need not to be over-reliant on a single co-ordinator was suggested by Cowie and Wallace (2000) and studies have emphasised the importance of the co-ordinator's role (e.g. Baginsky, 2004). However, my findings suggest that schools need to carefully consider who co-ordinates the peer support scheme. In Case Study Two the lead co-ordinator felt that the peer supporters needed extra training in aspects of active listening skills to be able to fulfil the new mentoring role. However, she felt CHIPS help was not needed as she and the other pastoral co-ordinator had the experience and skills to provide this support.

When choosing staff co-ordinator(s) schools should, to help ensure smooth running of peer support, take into account the amount of time they have available, and the skills and experience they will bring to the table. It would also be useful to think about the number of co-ordinators and how well they will be able to work together.

Support from staff

In both case studies the need for staff awareness and support emerged. In both schools co-ordinators and peer supporters perceived that not all staff knew about the scheme, or were interested in it. Some positive staff involvement was seen e.g. in referring pupils for help. However, staff sometimes caused barrier e.g. by removing signs for the peer support location or not allowing use of a notice board next to the peer support area.

Previous studies and guidance has suggested that higher staff understanding of a school's peer support scheme, and involvement with it, helps it to run better. For example, it is recommended that staff are given information beforehand and it has been found that problems can arise if not all staff are aware of the scheme (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Smith & Watson, 2004).

The case study findings particularly showed that support from senior management is important. In Case Study One a perceived lack of support from senior management prevented the scheme from adapting, whereas in Case Study Two the lead co-ordinator had a positive relationship with senior staff which promoted smooth running. The need for a good working relationship between the co-ordinator(s) and senior staff, and for high levels of support from senior management has been reported previously, including in the survey of CHIPS schools (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Houlston & Smith, 2009; MBF, 2011; Smith & Watson, 2004).

Peer support location

Issues with the location of peer support were seen in both schools; in Case Study One the room offered confidentiality but was impersonal and hard to find, and in Case Study Two the available space offered no confidentiality and was poorly signposted. This is certainly likely to have contributed to the low levels of pupil use, and to pupil concerns over whether their problems would be kept confidential. These findings support previous studies where difficulties finding a suitable designated peer support area occurred (MBF, 2011; Smith & Watson, 2004). It appears that a suitable location is critical to run an effective scheme but that a lack of space is a universal difficulty faced by schools running peer support.

Selecting and supporting peer supporters

Schools can select peer supporters in a variety of ways e.g. staff or peer nominations, asking for volunteers and using an application process, and pros and cons of the

different methods have been reported (e.g. Baginsky, 2004; Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Smith & Watson, 2004).

My findings support the importance of careful consideration when selecting peer supporters. Some difficulties in recruiting and selecting peer supporters were experienced by both schools. In Case Study One, the co-ordinator was concerned that the pupils who volunteered were not representative of the student body as they were generally pupils who had been vulnerable in the past, though target pupils actually saw this shared experience as essential. There was also a continual difficulty in recruiting male peer supporters, which appears to be a wide-scale difficulty for peer support in schools (e.g. Houlston et al., 2009; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Smith & Watson, 2004). In particular my findings back up the idea that choice of staff co-ordinator is important as their gender can lead to peer support as being overtly feminine (Cowie & Wallace, 2000).

In Case Study Two, recruiting males was not a problem, but staff felt that in future they should try to recruit pupils who were more outgoing and already able to talk to others well. Both schools did however have in place an application process that was in-depth and considered suitable by staff and pupils.

Concerns over confidentiality were expressed by pupils in both case studies, with a particular issue being that the peer listeners were in the older school years and that it was this age group that tended to bully the target pupils. One way of alleviating this barrier to pupil use may be to make all pupils in the school aware of how pupils become peer supporters. Target pupils in both case studies overwhelmingly did not know how a peer supporter was chosen or what their training involved. Pupils' ideas of who would make a good peer supporter, and what they needed to know, did however fit well with the real situation. Ensuring that target pupils are aware of the recruitment and training processes could be advantageous.

The importance of providing peer supporters with adequate support was seen in both case studies. This is especially important if there is low use of the service, as peer supporters may become frustrated and demotivated.

Support from external sources

The importance of providing high quality, appropriate training for peer supporters has been identified previously, and that having an outside organisation provide it can make the pupils feel valued (Smith & Watson, 2004). What has not been emphasised though, is the additional support that an external organisation can provide. In both case studies the co-ordinators were able to ask the CHIPS staff for help and suggestions if needed,

and found participating in my study was supportive in itself. In addition, in Case Study One the lead co-ordinator accessed additional help from local schools running peer support and from a regional peer mentoring conference. This external support was especially valuable for this co-ordinator due to the perceived lack of support from within the school.

My studies therefore suggest that the value of external support for the peer support co-ordinator should not be over-looked.

Implications for practice

Considering the combined findings from these case studies, I suggest the following key implications for peer support practice:

- Peer support can support vulnerable pupils
- Peer support can promote personal development for peer supporters, but may lead to perceived rather than measurable advances
- Where a school already has a highly positive climate, there is limited scope for peer support to have an impact in this area
- Peer support can support bullying victims, but is unlikely to reduce bullying levels
- Support for co-ordinators, from senior management and other staff, as well as from external sources, should not be under-valued
- Peer supporters need adequate support, particularly if low pupil use leads to demotivation
- Schools need to ensure pupils are not only aware of peer support, but have in-depth knowledge about how to access support and how peer supporters are selected and trained
- Careful consideration should be given to the selection of both the scheme co-ordinator and the peer supporters
- Careful consideration should be given to the location of peer support, and the effectiveness of the location should be reviewed
- The fit between the design of the scheme and pupils' needs should be carefully considered. It is essential that schools are willing and able to be flexible in their approach to peer support, and able to adapt the scheme as required to meet pupil needs. This may lead to multiple approaches being used within one setting

Overall, the findings from these case studies indicate that peer support has the potential to benefit individual pupils, and to a lesser extent school environments, but that there are common challenges which schools must overcome. Despite universal issues faced by schools being identified previously, this has not led to potential solutions being easily accessible to schools.

Summary

This chapter has compared findings from two comparable case studies of peer support in UK secondary schools using the CHIPS peer support service. Broadly similar findings were seen. In both schools peer support evolved to include more than one approach, there was low use of peer listening, and pupil awareness was high but in-depth knowledge was not as strong. Pupil attitudes were mixed, but pupils were positive about the idea of being able to talk to a peer rather than a teacher.

There was no impact in either school upon pupils' perceptions of school climate, possibly because these were already very positive at the start of the study period. Impact upon bullying levels was seen in one school only, and only for an initial decrease. In both schools other aspects of the bullying experience did not alter. Individual pupils, including bullying victims, were benefited by the schemes and users generally had positive experiences. Peer supporters in both schools also enjoyed their role, despite challenges, and perceived benefits – though no measurable improvements upon social competence were observed in Case Study Two.

The case studies support findings from past literature that there are practical factors which schools must overcome to create an effective scheme. Choosing the right co-ordinator(s), support from senior management and other staff, peer support location, considerations in selecting and supporting peer supporters, and support from external sources were identified as challenges in both schools.

Implications for peer support practice were presented, with the note that identification of universal issues faced by schools has not led to potential solutions being easily accessible.

Chapter Ten: Overall Summary and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents an overall summary of this thesis and a discussion of its findings. This thesis is essentially formed by two halves; a cross-national look at peer support use in Japan, South Korea and the UK, and in-depth investigation of the development of peer support within schools in the UK through two case studies. The findings from these halves have already been individually discussed, in Chapters Four and Nine. Therefore this chapter considers the contributions of this thesis to the literature as a whole.

Initially a summary of the thesis is given, followed by a look at the findings in terms of key contributions to the literature. I then consider the limitations of the thesis, before presenting conclusions and implications for peer support practice. Finally, I make proposals for the future directions for peer support research.

Summary

In Chapter One, I reviewed the past research and literature available on peer support in schools. This began with a look at the history of peer support practice: its emergence in the US, Canada and Australia in the 1970s, its roots in increasing global recognition of the rights of children and pastoral care in schools, and its popularity as an anti-bullying initiative. It was seen that peer support is used in many countries around the world, although only in the UK has a survey been performed of the extent of its use. The main types seen in the literature were peer listening, mentoring, befriending and mediation, although variations were noted – most noticeably seen in Japan.

I then looked at the impact of peer support that has been evidenced in past research. Benefits were seen for the whole school, target pupils and peer supporters. Peer support can make a school feel safer, and have a positive impact upon perception of school climate, though findings upon its effects upon bullying are less clear. Target pupils largely self-report that peer support use is beneficial, and staff and peer supporters may also witness these benefits. Peer supporters have also been shown to benefit through skills development and improved social relationships, and some measurable advances on aspects of social competence have been reported.

Factors which affected the impact and effectiveness of peer support were also evident in the literature. These included issues such as the selection and training of peer supporters, peer support location and the need for support within the school.

Limitations were however identified within the past research. Studies have tended to be short-term only, in contrast to the long time which may be needed for peer support to become embedded. A lot of evidence has been qualitative and self-report only, and obtained at one time point. It was concluded that there was a clear need for more longitudinal, mixed methodology case studies.

In addition it was seen that there was a lack of information available comparing peer support use in different countries. Peer support can be expected to differ within different national contexts, and an understanding of how it may differ is important when comparing studies conducted in different countries.

The rest of the thesis aimed to address some of these limitations. Chapter Two presented a qualitative study of peer support use in Japan, where key informants working in the area of peer support in different areas of the country were interviewed. Examples of practice were detailed, and themes in the way that peer support is practiced in Japan were identified. Major themes identified were: Evolution of Japanese Peer Support, Conflicts, Support for Practitioners, Influence of Japanese Context, Barriers, Aims and Benefits, and Features.

In Chapter Three I reported a similar qualitative study in South Korea, although due to the limited use of peer support I also investigated other anti-bullying work. Key informants working in areas related to anti-bullying and peer support were interviewed, and examples of anti-bullying and peer support initiatives detailed. Major themes identified were: Gap between Policy and Practice, Collectivist Values, and Potential for Peer Support.

Chapter Four compared the findings from the studies in Japan and South Korea, with past research on peer support in the UK. This allowed consideration of how peer support use may differ in Eastern and Western countries. I discussed how peer support was affected by the different national contexts. The national education systems, including the provision made for social and emotional learning, affected how easily peer support could fit within the school timetable. Peer support was sometimes used as an anti-bullying initiative in each country, and different methods were suited to the nature of school bullying in that country to different extents. In Japan and South Korea types of peer support were seen which appeared well-suited to tackle the social exclusion involved in *ijime* and *wang-ta*, whereas in the UK the common types used were perhaps not as well-suited to the nature of Western bullying. It was also suggested that cultural values impacted upon peer support practice. The importance of community was reflected in the findings for Japan and South Korea, nations which are traditionally considered more collectivist, with peer support often being aimed at

fostering a harmonious community. By contrast in the UK, peer support tends to be aimed at individual target pupils. However, it was noted that caution should be taken in applying such cultural interpretations and the dimension of individualism-collectivism was recognised as too simplistic an explanation.

The remainder of this thesis then focused on an in-depth look at the development of peer support in individual schools. A pilot study was presented in Chapter Five, in preparation for later case studies of peer support. This study tested questionnaires for pupils on their use of, knowledge of and attitudes towards peer support, and concluded that these could be used with some slight alterations. A questionnaire for peer supporters to survey social competence, using three individual measures, was also piloted. It was concluded that the Rosenberg (1965) Self-esteem Scale and subscales from the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) could be used, but that the Social Skills instrument (Fox and Boulton, 2005) was not suitable. Instead it was decided that a conflict resolution tactics scale should be used, the development of which was presented in the next chapter. This pilot study also provided experience in running a focus group with peer supporters. Grounded theory analysis of this focus group showed that the experience of providing support to others had benefits for peer mentors but also involved challenges. Overall the experience of being peer supporters made a valuable contribution to the peer mentors' transition to adulthood.

In Chapter Six I presented a study developing and piloting a measure to survey conflict resolution tactics in young people. Previous literature suggested that conflict resolution skills are particularly important in adolescence and that conflict tactics become more sophisticated with age, though evidence on gender differences was unclear. It was decided that a questionnaire would be the most suitable type of measure and The Conflict Tactics Scale (Strauss, 1979) was identified as the most cited measure. The Coping with Disagreements questionnaire was developed based upon several previous modified versions of the CTS which had been used with adolescents. The new questionnaire introduced a new subscale on Persuasion as a tactic and used equal numbers of items in each of eight subscales. A principal components analysis of the pilot data was inconclusive, but the alpha scores of the subscales were sufficiently reliable, although somewhat low, for use in Case Study Two and the new Persuasion subscale was retained.

Chapters Seven and Eight presented two longitudinal, mixed methodology case studies of peer support in English secondary schools. These case studies aimed to provide in-depth exploration of scheme development, and the two school peer support

schemes were selected with a view to being as comparable as possible. Both schools used the CHIPS peer support service, where staff attended a training day, CHIPS provided a training day for peer supporters at the school, and schools had contact with a CHIPS regional co-ordinator.

Case Study One, summarised in Chapter Seven, was an 18-month study of a peer listening approach where pupils in year 10 supported pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 primarily through a drop-in service. Data were collected every six months in four waves. Quantitative measures included questionnaires for target pupils, surveying use of, knowledge of and attitudes towards peer support, bullying experiences and perceptions of school climate. Qualitative measures were observation, and interviews and focus groups with co-ordinating staff, pupil users and non-users, and peer supporters. It was found that pupil awareness of peer support increased, though attitudes towards it remained mixed throughout. There was a low level of use of the peer listening service, but users did benefit and had largely positive experiences. The level of reported school bullying decreased significantly in the first six months following the start of the scheme, but then remained at a similar level for the remainder of the study period. The nature of pupils' bullying experiences and the proportion who reported bullying others did not significantly alter across time. Pupils' perceptions of school climate began and remained positive, showing no impact of peer support. There was strong qualitative evidence that the peer supporters benefited from their experiences, though they faced challenges in their role. Finally, a number of practical factors were identified which had affected the scheme's development.

Case Study Two, described in Chapter Eight, was a 6-month longitudinal study of a peer support scheme where pupils in year 10 supported pupils in years 7, 8 and 9. Initially this was through a drop-in peer listening service but during the study period changed to a one-to-one peer mentoring approach with peer supporters paired with year 7 pupils. Data were collected in two waves, at the start and end of the study period. The quantitative and qualitative measures were the same as in Case Study One, with the exception of a questionnaire being used to measure aspects of social competence in the peer supporters and matched controls, and a greater number of items being used to measure perceptions of school climate.

It was found that there was low use of the peer listening service, prompting the switch to a predominantly mentoring approach. Pupil users of the listening service had generally benefited, though they were mostly unsure if they would use the service again. Pupils who had been mentored reported finding it a good experience, but felt that they had not required mentoring and thus had not particularly benefited. General

pupil awareness of peer support increased, though attitudes did not alter across time. The levels of reported victims and bullies did not significantly change across the study, nor did the nature of bullying experiences. Perceptions of school climate did not change, beginning and remaining highly positive. Qualitative reports indicated that peer supporters had largely positive experiences and had benefited, although no improvements were found on the measures of social competence. Practical factors which impacted upon the scheme's development were also identified.

The findings from the two case studies were compared in Chapter Nine. In both case studies there was low use of peer support and very limited impact upon bullying experiences and perceptions of school climate. However, qualitative evidence suggested that pupils who had used the scheme had good experiences, and that peer supporters benefited from their involvement. The limited impact seen in both schools contrasted with many findings of past research in peer support. However, the longitudinal, mixed methods approach used in the case studies meant that a number of practical factors were identified which affected the scheme's development. This allowed an in-depth understanding of why the particular outcomes were found. The case studies taken together indicated practice points for peer support use in schools.

Overall, this thesis has provided a global and holistic perspective on peer support use in schools; it has looked at peer support use on a large, cross-national scale, and on an in-depth case study level.

Discussion of findings and contributions to the literature

Although peer support use in schools has been researched and written about in many countries, this thesis presents the first consideration of the ways in which practice is affected by the national context. It is perhaps surprising that thus far little attention has been paid to this area. Within bullying research, comparison of its nature and anti-bullying work in different countries is now a major focus (e.g. Morita et al., 1999). Given peer support's common use as an anti-bullying initiative, a similar cross-national perspective appears to naturally follow. Furthermore, peer support practice has not developed in isolation in individual countries, for example the impetus has largely come from international establishment of the rights of children, and I have shown that Japanese practice has consciously been influenced by models from other countries.

Whilst the research on peer support in Japan and South Korea is only of a small-scale, qualitative nature, I hope that the findings, and the comparison with what is known for the UK, provide valuable initial insights that can help shape future research. It will be particularly interesting to see how this fits with the outcomes of the PEPE

study (Del Barrio et al., 2011; Naylor et al., 2009), comparing peer support schemes in the UK, Spain and Italy, when available for all three European countries.

This thesis has also furthered understanding of peer support development at the individual school level. The two case studies provide in-depth looks at the ways in which schemes develop over time and the influencing factors. To inform good future practice, it is essential to understand the whole process of creating and sustaining a peer support scheme. In both case studies very limited measurable impact was seen upon whole school outcome areas - bullying and climate perceptions. If taken in isolation these findings might suggest that peer support may not be worth the time and effort required by schools. However, the reasons for these findings were illuminated, and qualitative benefits were seen for pupil users and peer supporters.

Interestingly, this thesis shows that schools face similar challenges but may respond in different ways. It also indicates that schools in different countries may experience similar challenges. Aside from CHIPS, at the time of this thesis there were also other large-scale providers of peer support training within the UK. In South Korea peer support was not used extensively and there were no bodies which specifically provided help for schools in peer support. For anti-bullying work in general the study suggested that staff faced pressure rather than received support in this area. In Japan though, it was clear that co-ordinating school staff received valuable support from the JPSA, other practitioners, and university experts. Whilst not all peer support practitioners in Japan are members of JPSA, a strength of such a national body was the opportunities it provided for practitioners to meet and share good practice.

I feel that enabling peer support practitioners to communicate with each other is a key way to promote effective practice. Creating local or regional networks of schools may be one way for peer support organisations in the UK, if not a national body, to ensure school co-ordinators have ongoing support that is cost effective.

Difficulty in fitting peer support into school life was seen in Japan and South Korea, and in the UK case studies – despite the greater emphasis upon social and emotional learning in the UK national education system. Arguably, the greater focus within the UK upon benefiting target pupils and training a select group of peer supporters, positions peer support outside class activities. Peer support cannot be easily situated within e.g. PSHCE classes, because it is not a whole class activity.

Some practical factors have already been described in the literature. I would argue that knowledge has not translated into practical solutions for schools, to a desirable extent. It is essential that peer support is adapted to suit the individual school context, but universal challenges exist. Organisations, such as CHIPS, could help

schools by not only acknowledging that these challenges exist, but by providing example solutions that other schools have used with success. Schools would need to consider which solutions would best suit their context, but there is no reason why each school should have to re-invent the wheel when it comes to peer support troubleshooting. Greater emphasis upon the problems schools are likely to face, would also help allay fears that encountering difficulties means the co-ordinator has got it wrong or that peer support is not suitable for that school. This is particularly important in terms of justifying continued use of resources to senior management.

In terms of the wider picture, the two halves of this thesis both call into question the comparability of peer support case studies. It is not possible to simply see that two case studies found a positive impact upon a particular outcome and conclude that peer support in general will have this effect. For valid conclusions to be drawn, authors need to provide details of the scheme studied – the findings of my case studies are comparable because of the similarity in initial scheme design. No studies have yet directly compared the impact of different types of peer support scheme however. Crucially, details of any ongoing issues limiting effectiveness should be reported. For example, in considering findings from Case Study Two, it is essential to know that the scheme moved from a listening to a mentoring approach.

The national context the peer support scheme operated within must also be given due consideration both in reporting case studies and in interpreting their findings. For example, a particular peer support scheme may have had a great impact upon a particular outcome because it was well-suited to the nature of the education system, the nature of bullying or the predominant cultural values. It has long been noted that a one size fits all approach does not work for peer support in schools; my findings make it clear that this must be borne in mind by researchers as well as schools.

This does not mean that research findings are in no way generalisable. Indeed, I have shown that there are some core practical and cross-cultural factors which affect peer support practice across nations. These will not have the same effect upon each scheme however; there are universal challenges but not universal impact upon outcomes.

Limitations of the thesis

This thesis has investigated the use and impact of peer support in schools, and has a broad scope. It has looked both at the extent and nature of peer support use cross-nationally, as well as providing case studies of peer support in UK secondary schools. Arguably, focusing on only one of these areas could have enabled greater depth of

findings. However, given the practical restrictions it would have been difficult to conduct further research along either of the two strands of this thesis. The amount of time needed to run longitudinal studies of peer support, and the difficulties of running more than one simultaneously, mean running a further in-depth case study would not have been possible in the time-scale. Whilst the qualitative studies in Japan and Korea are relatively small-scale, these studies took advantage of specific funding opportunities to conduct research in these countries. Longer-term funding would have been required to conduct more extensive research and more fully develop a picture of peer support use. Therefore, I feel that the broad scope of this thesis, combining two strands of research, provided a greater contribution to the literature than would otherwise have been possible.

There are limitations though within these two aspects of my research. Limitations have already been identified for the studies in Japan and Korea in Chapters Two and Three. The participant samples were largely dependent upon gatekeepers, the people I was working with and their contacts, meaning that the samples cannot be taken as fully representative. Translation difficulties were also present when conducting many of the interviews in both studies, meaning that not all of the information conveyed by participants will have been captured and some of the meaning may have been lost. On balance though, participants were recruited from more than one geographical area in both studies and the information obtained was sufficiently detailed to provide useful small-scale explorations.

Limitations have also already been identified for the two case studies, in Chapters Seven and Eight. A key weakness is the lack of specific testable variables that were tied to aims of the schemes. In both schools peer support was created with the general aim of benefitting pupils by providing additional support. In Case Study Two, there was a more concrete additional aim to tackle school bullying but once the scheme was running there was little focus upon this. Rather than test for positive change on specific outcome areas identified by the schools, I investigated the impact of peer support in three areas identified by past research: whole school environment, benefits for target pupils and benefits for peer supporters. The largely null findings obtained in the two case studies suggest that for peer support systems to have demonstrable impact they may need to have specific aims – for which change can be measured. With only more general aims, peer support activities may not be focused enough to achieve measurable impact.

A bigger limitation not yet addressed is the study design of the case studies. In both studies a pre-post design was used, with additional long-term follow-up in Case

Study One. Whilst useful findings can be obtained from pre-post studies, the lack of control groups of pupils not exposed to peer support means that it is not possible to attribute any significant changes found to the peer support intervention with certainty. Ideally, studies of peer support in schools would adopt a randomised control trial (RCT) design, with matched pupils randomly assigned to receive either peer or the usual level of pastoral care available in their school. Within research evaluating the effects of an intervention, RCTs are the most rigorous way of testing whether any changes occur as a direct result of the intervention rather than other causes. For example, using an RCT design would have made it possible to rule out any normal maturation effects as pupils grow older across the study period.

The practicalities of running an RCT to evaluate the effects of a peer support scheme are, however, considerable. For a drop-in peer listening scheme, as initially created in both case study schools, having a control group of pupils is difficult as support is available to all pupils in the target years. Ethically, it would not be appropriate to allow some pupils but not others to access support. Additionally, given that peer support has been shown to have positive effects for whole school environments, the pupils in the control group would still be exposed to peer support indirectly. For example, staff may have more time to support them with their problems if other pupils are having their needs met via peer support.

Another possibility would have been to run an RCT by randomly assigning schools to either run peer support or not, effectively using another school or school(s) as a control group. There have been past studies of peer support using designs comparing schools with and without peer support. A study of the *Students for Peace* violence-prevention intervention in the US randomly assigned eight middle schools as experimental and control schools (Kelner et al., 2000) and another US study used a delayed-treatment design in three schools using peer mediation (Smith, S. W. et al., 2002). Two reports of peer support in England have also compared two schools with peer support to two without (Cowie & Oztug, 2008; Cowie et al., 2008).

The practicalities however make this type of design difficult to achieve for longitudinal studies within doctoral research. Schools would need to be matched as closely as possible in terms of type and size of school, the composition of the pupil bodies (e.g. proportion from different ethnicities, eligible for free school meals, with learning difficulties or disabilities) and pre-existing levels of pastoral care, school bullying and school climate. For this thesis, where I was specifically looking at school receiving the CHIPS peer support service, I would have ideally also needed to identify schools which had applied to CHIPS at around the same time, which were fairly well

matched, and willing to be randomly assigned to postpone development of peer support until after the study period.

Selecting a quasi-experimental design instead of an RCT, with use of a naturally occurring control school(s), i.e. a school similar to the intervention schools but not planning to develop peer support at that time, would have mitigated some of these challenges. Some caution would have been needed as it is possible that the choice of a school to set up peer support indicates some differences from schools which do not, e.g. staff may be more caring towards their pupils, but this could have controlled for within the analyses. However, collecting large amounts of data from multiple schools simultaneously would have remained a challenge within doctoral research.

In future studies I would though wish to aim for a more rigorous design to be confident that any changes seen could be attributed to the peer support schemes. A quasi-experimental design, with intervention and control schools, may offer the best compromise between the need for a rigorous study and one which is practically achievable.

The pre-post designs used were the most achievable within the limits of this thesis. Although there were limitations to both case studies I feel that they were sufficiently rigorous to evaluate the impact of peer support, particularly given the use of in-depth mixed methodology.

Conclusions and implications for peer support practice

Considering the thesis as a whole, I propose the following conclusions and implications for peer support practice:

- Peer support can support vulnerable pupils
- Peer support can promote personal development for peer supporters
- Peer support can foster citizenship/a harmonious community. However, it is not possible to make a strong conclusion regarding impact upon pupil perceptions of school climate from this thesis
- Peer support can support bullying victims, but is unlikely to reduce bullying levels
- Funders, practitioners, and school staff in particular, should be realistic about what peer support can and cannot be expected to achieve. This is particularly true where peer support is used as an anti-bullying initiative
- The above should be clearly conveyed to peer supporters, to help avoid unrealistic expectations and subsequent demotivation

- Scheme developers should be clear about the aims but also flexible enough to adapt in the face of challenges
- There are universal challenges in developing and running a peer support scheme
- Peer support organisations should make potential solutions to challenges accessible to school staff
- Support for peer support scheme co-ordinators is vital, both from within the school and from external sources
- Networks of peer support practitioners, particularly at the school level, are advantageous

Future research directions

Peer support continues to be used internationally, thus continued research is important to further understanding and promote good practice. Three strands of research would now be advantageous:

- 1) In-depth case studies of schools should continue to be used to shed light upon the relationship between how a scheme develops and the impact peer support can realistically achieve. Large-scale studies involving multiple schools with peer support schemes that are initially similar in design would be especially valuable, as well as studies using control comparison schools
- 2) Studies directly comparing different types of peer support are essential to investigate the comparability of findings from case studies involving different methods
- 3) Researchers need to take a cross-national perspective to understanding peer support practice. This may be furthered by:
 - i) national surveys of the extent and nature of peer support use
 - ii) studies comparing similar peer support schemes in multiple countries
 - iii) the forming of a cross-national network of researchers and practitioners, to share practice and findings from individual countries, and draw implications for peer support practice internationally

Continued research and promotion of good practice will ensure peer support lives up to its potential to improve school environments, and nurture children and young people around the world.

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Appendix I: Details of Participants and Examples of Peer Support Schemes in Japan for Chapter Two

The below table provides details of the participants for the study of Japanese peer support presented in Chapter Two. The participants' locations in Japan and other identifying information have been excluded to ensure anonymity.

Participant's Position	Interview Language	Participant Label and Other information
Elementary School Teacher	Japanese with translator	Elementary Teacher One
Elementary School Teacher	Japanese with translator	Elementary Teacher Two
Elementary School Teacher	Japanese with translator	Elementary Teacher Three
Junior High School Teacher/Masters student	Japanese with translator	Junior High Teacher One
Junior High School Teacher	Japanese with translator	Junior High Teacher Two
Junior High School Teacher and Two Elementary School Teachers	Japanese with translator	Junior High Teacher Three; Elementary School Teachers Four and Five The teachers each delivered part of a presentation on their peer support work, and I asked them questions after their presentation.
Junior High School Peer Supporters (three)	Japanese with translator	Junior High Peer Supporters One, Two and Three
High School Teachers (two)	Japanese with translator	High School Teachers One and Two
High School Peer Tutors (three)	Japanese with translator	High School Peer Supporters One, Two and Three
Technical High School Teacher	Japanese with translator	Technical High School Teacher
Elementary school principal (member of JPISA)	Japanese with translator	Elementary Principal

Peer Support Trainer (former practitioner)	Japanese with translator	Peer Support Trainer
Regional Education Supervisor (former Junior High School guidance teacher)	Interview 1: English Interview 2: Japanese with translator	Education Supervisor
University staff (former peer support practitioner)	Japanese with translator	University Staff Member
Researcher/JPSA member	Japanese with translator	Researcher Participant had particular expertise in peer mediation.
JPSA member	Japanese with translator	JPSA Member Interviewed with below participant. Participant also held a senior role in a teacher training institute and was a former Junior High School Teacher.
Senior JPSA Member	Japanese with translator	Senior JPSA Member One Interviewed with above participants.
Researcher/Senior JPSA Member	Japanese with translator	Researcher/Senior JPSA Member
Practitioner and masters student/Senior JPSA Member	English	Senior JPSA Member Two
Government Researcher within education	English	Government Researcher Requested that notes were taken during the interview, not a recording.

The below table shows examples of peer support schemes, described by the participants in Chapter Two. The examples are grouped into type of peer support practice, although some systems used several types of peer support practice so there is some overlap.

Peer Support Type	School Level Reported In	Aims Given	Description of Examples
Q&A Handout Method	Elementary Junior High	Provide students with advice; help with social relationships; reduce bullying; improve school climate; help with worries about school transition.	1) Elementary School Teacher described a system that had been running for ten years, where pupils wrote their problems anonymously on a piece of paper and put it in a special box. The teacher could access this box and gave the concern sheets to a group of students who read it and thought of some advice. The problem and answers were printed on a newsletter (the Q&A Handout) and given to all pupils. After awhile the school introduced junior high school students answering the concerns of elementary school pupils – when the peer supporters at the elementary school would like them to help. Urgent or serious problems would not be passed on, instead the teacher would post a note for the anonymous person to contact them. Peer supporters are volunteers in the oldest two grades of elementary school (aged 10 to 12) and are mostly girls. At first there was low use of the system and now they produce three or four newsletters a month, as around six to eight pupils write a concern.

			<p>2) Former junior high school guidance teacher had worked in a school which had set up peer support to help pupils overcome serious problems. The pupils had been at an elementary school where a former student killed a teacher, and afterwards there was a lot of student violence. At first the teachers worked to improve the school climate by getting volunteer students involved in activities to improve the school, and help the community. When there was a better school climate a Q&A Handout system was introduced. Junior high school pupils helped elementary school students. The students received many questions or worries, but could only answer some of them. The students thought of the answers and staff produced the newsletter. Any student could write an answer and their names were written with their answers. Students did other activities to support others, such as activities to stop others from smoking and creating a drama about bullying.</p>
Peer Mediation	Elementary Junior High	Improve social skills; prevent big conflicts; reduce violence	<p>1) In the peer education system described by an elementary school teacher, students made a drama on peer mediation.</p> <p>2) A junior high school had a programme where in the first year all students in their class were given training in anger management and in the second year training in peer mediation. The teachers made videos demonstrating peer mediation which all students in the 3rd grade (ages 14 to 15) watched, and the students also did role-plays.</p>

			<p>3) After the teacher above taught peer mediation in their school, four new elementary school teachers decided to use it in their classes. The teachers all used the same materials, including a video they made that was based on a popular TV programme. The peer mediation training used the ALS model developed in Canada: Agree; Listen; Solve. Students watched the video and did role-plays. One teacher first tried this with the 4th grade (ages 9 to 10) and then with the 3rd grade (ages 8 to 9), but it was less effective with the younger students. However, another had been successful with their 3rd grade class. Overall the teachers felt it worked better with 4th grade or junior high school students.</p>
Peer Tutoring	Elementary Junior High High School	Improve grades in target subject; benefit peer supporters	<p>1) Peer Tutoring system where high school students volunteered to tutor junior school pupils. This was seen as a special feature of the school. Peer Tutors worked in pairs and were very autonomous, preparing activities by themselves. The tutees were in groups of two or three – in the 1st grade (ages 12 to 13) tutoring was compulsory and in 2nd and 3rd grade (ages 13 to 15) students could opt-in. Students could also talk about daily life and a supportive relationship was developed. Groups changed every six months and students in the last part of high school could not act as tutors due to exams. The scheme was run by six teachers – four in the high school and two in the junior school. Tutors wrote reports on the bi-monthly sessions and staff gave feedback.</p>

			2) Elementary School Principal asked by a government department to create peer tutoring to improve grades. Chose to do this in mathematics classes, with children teaching others in their class. The principal gave training to the other teachers and they ran it in their classes.
Community Approach / Befriending	Elementary Junior High	Improve social relationships; assertiveness; change bad behaviour; improve school climate	<p>1) Junior High School Teacher trained a class through weekly training, using activities where pupils work together. Training focused on social relationships, understanding self, communication and assertiveness.</p> <p>2) Elementary school teacher learnt from high school peer support practice and adapted it for elementary school. Delivered five training sessions on greeting others, communication, understanding emotions and assertiveness. In the second year the teacher introduced choice of activities as well as training e.g. talking to lonely pupils in younger grades, helping younger pupils carry lunch trays and helping younger children learn after school. When some of the trained children moved to junior high school they created peer support by training their new peers.</p> <p>3) Elementary School Principal described a system where members of the student committee were trained in how to give peer support by Trevor Cole from Canada. These pupils then told other pupils how to do peer support to support students in the younger grades.</p>

		<p>4) A former junior high school teacher had set up peer support nine years ago, where at first pupils of all ages were trained in their classes in how to listen and talk to others. In the second year students were trained in their whole grades, and in the third year they used peer support in other activities. Examples of activities were pupils using their skills on work experience placements, and older students advising younger ones on cleaning for club activities.</p> <p>5) A former junior high school teacher had in the past been asked by the government ministry to create a peer support programme – the school had applied for funding for a challenging school to set up an educational programme. The teacher arranged for junior high school pupils to support pupils in an elementary school e.g. communicating and advising on small troubles.</p> <p>6) The Government Researcher described the ‘Group Encounter’ method, which was adapted from group counselling. Students do exercises and role playing together, sharing their feelings. This was described as being used by elementary schools. The participant thought this was really social skills training, but schools could receive funding for this from the same fund as for peer support.</p> <p>7) One Senior JPSA Member had set up a peer support system as a high school teacher. Student committee members were given training on relationships, communication skills, knowing themselves, relaxation techniques and peer mediation. In one session they were given help to plan how they would use their skills</p>
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			<p>to help others, and in follow-up sessions talked about how their activities went. Example activities were greeting other students, sitting with people who are eating lunch on their own and listening in daily conversations to help with small problems. Other staff are continuing the programme but that year the staff members involved were going to deliver intensive training in the summer vacation.</p> <p>8) A teacher had developed and run a peer support programme in a junior high school where students in an entire class were given training without formal activities following. A self-report measure had reportedly found fairly positive results.</p>
Peer Education	Elementary High School (Technical)	Prevent bullying	<p>1) In response to a serious incident of cyber-bullying a teacher in a technical high school worked with a peer support researcher to develop a peer education programme. Students from each class were nominated and worked to make a presentation about bullying which they gave to other pupils. In another year the school did another project with the 1st grade (ages 15 to 16) where students were nominated from each class and researched a celebrity. They wrote messages about bullying from the celebrities' perspective and delivered it to a small group of students.</p> <p>2) An elementary school teacher described a system where four or five students from each 5th grade class (ages 10 to 11) came together to make a drama. The drama was about conflicts and peer mediation. All students in the 5th grade were also given peer support training in class.</p>

			<p>3) At a peer support training workshop for elementary school students, the Peer Support Trainer explained that these students were representatives from their school's student council. These pupils would then teach the other council members about the training and how to use peer support to help younger pupils.</p>
Student Summit	Junior High		<p>1) The Education Supervisor was the organiser of a student summit where all junior high school students in the city send representatives. The idea came from a student, and the students wanted to work together. Each school sent two students, making 24 in total, though most were girls. The student summit meets once a month after school. The students decided the aims are to reduce bullying, do street cleaning and smiling, and greeting others. The summit arranges an annual drama where other pupils from all the schools write and act in a play about bullying. The drama is recorded and shown to pupils in all the schools.</p>

Appendix II: Details of Participants, and Examples of Anti-Bullying Initiatives and Peer Support Schemes in South Korea for Chapter Three

The below table provides details of the participants for the study of anti-bullying work and peer support in South Korea, presented in Chapter Three. The participants' locations in South Korea and other identifying information have been excluded to ensure anonymity.

Participant's Position	Interview Language	Participant Label and Other Information
Researcher	English	Researcher One Requested that notes were taken during the interview, not a recording.
Researcher	English	Researcher Two Participant was primarily based in the US but was on a placement in South Korea. Research focuses on bullying in Korean and US students.
Researcher	English	Researcher Three Participant based in US but was conducting research on bullying in South Korea.
High School Teacher	Korean with translator	High School Teacher One
High School Teacher	Korean with translator	High School Teacher Two
Former High School Teacher	Korean with translator	High School Teacher Three
Elementary School Teacher	Korean with translator	Elementary Teacher One Interviewed with other elementary school teacher.
Elementary School Teacher	Korean with translator	Elementary Teacher Two Interviewed with other elementary school teacher.
Local Education Office Member	Korean with translator	Education Office Member Requested that notes were taken during the interview, not a recording.
Government officer	Korean with	Government Officer

working within health, welfare and family affairs	translator	
Representative for a children's charity (two)	Korean with translator	Charity Representative One and Two Interviewed with other charity representative in one region.
Representative for a children's charity	Korean with translator	Charity Representative Three Representative from a regional office of the same charity as above participants.

The below tables show detailed descriptions of proactive and reactive anti-bullying initiatives used in South Korea, as well as examples of peer support schemes, reported by participants in Chapter Three. It should be noted that the information is based upon what participants reported, and thus may not be completely accurate.

Proactive anti-bullying initiatives reported by participants:

Type of Anti-Bullying Initiative	Level	Description given by participant(s)
Laws on school violence	National	A number of pieces of legislation related to school violence, and thus school bullying. Participants reported that the first was in 1995 and required school head teachers to report occurrences of bullying to the local office for education. Current legislation was said to have begun with a law passed in 2004, which has subsequently been revised. Law requires schools to give prevention education to pupils once or twice per year, to plan prevention work once every five years and to hire specialist teachers/counsellors to work with victims of violence.
Regulations and policies of local education offices – example given from a regional office	Regional	Schools are issued advice by their regional office for education. I was provided with information on the anti-bullying programme of a local education office. Sections of this overlap with other initiatives described here, and were part of a one year programme. It included: a special department to prevent bullying, regular meetings between the department, parent representatives and teachers, Wee Centres, involvement of other organisations, an emergency support organisation which would go directly to the school, an SOS support team, an anti-bullying conference of 15 experts, creation of a network between teachers with experience dealing with bullying, and a team to protect learning spaces involving community volunteers monitoring school areas and teaching students how to stay safe at school.
Government information	National	Schools are sent government produced documents with information that should be delivered to students. One teacher also reported that the ministry for education compiles booklets with examples of good teaching practice, in which teachers may read about effective anti-bullying approaches used in other schools. However it was not clear if this was done at a regional or national level, or how the information is collated.

Government anti-bullying campaigns	National	The government funded two national, anti-bullying prevention programmes, developed by a researcher. Both programmes were designed to focus upon encouraging bystander pupils to defend victims when bullying happened. These programmes were delivered in the 1990s and the resources are no longer available. The HELP-ing programme included multiple one hour sessions delivered by the class teacher involving activities. The later Si Woo Bo Woo programme, involved an anti-bullying video to be shown in the classroom.
SOS phone line	National	Special government-run phone line to report school violence related issues and access help. This appeared to be for use by students, teachers and parents, and run through counselling centres.
School police officers	School	Police officers are assigned to schools and may give talks warning students not to commit school violence/bullying. Teachers, schools or students can contact the police but it was suggested that after 30 days if a case of bullying is not resolved the police must be brought in. Police have the power to sue perpetrators, though this was seen as rare.
School committees	School	Schools are required to have a committee responsible for dealing with school violence. This committee may give guidance and policies, or set punishments for perpetrators. From participants' information this committee appeared to be formed of ten to 15 community members, such as retired teachers or policemen.
Teacher training	National	Teachers can go on training courses to become specialist teachers who deal with school violence/bullying. These teachers then work in multiple schools.
Charity campaigning	National	A children's charity has campaigned around the issue of school violence. This included government lobbying and a public campaign in metro stations to raise awareness, which apparently received positive feedback. In addition many other organisations were described by participants as being involved in anti-bullying work.

Reactive anti-bullying initiatives reported by participants:

Type of Anti-Bullying Initiative	Level	Description given by participant(s)
Wee Centres	National	These are special centres where pupils involved in school violence can be counselled. At the time of the study they had been developed five months previously, and there were ten centres nationwide. 'Wee' stood for 'we-emotion' or 'we-education'. The centres provided free support and students could attend voluntarily or be recommended by their school. The member of a local education office suggested that the Wee Centres aimed to prevent bullying, as well as help students with other emotional problems. It was unclear how the centres were involved in prevention; either counselling was seen as a way to help prevent bullying or details of this may have been lost in translation. Counselling centres were mentioned by both the Education Office Member and the Government Officer, and it was not clear if this always referred to the Wee Centres. Overall I was given the impression that aside from the Wee Centres, a recent initiative, other government supported counselling centres were in place.
Wee Classes	School	The plan for preventing school violence for the regional office included a description of 'Wee Classes', 'a friendly group of friends'. These were a classroom in a school where students who were bullied or not adapted to the school environment could go for specialist counselling. However, these did not appear to be present in every school.
School Counsellors	School	Schools were required by law to hire specialist teachers who provided counselling for pupils involved in bullying/school violence. These teachers received special training and would work from school to school.
Counsellors in office of education	Regional	Each regional office of education was required to hire five professional counsellors, who would help students involved in bullying.
Special school	Unclear	The Government Officer described a special school for children involved in bullying/school violence to attend, particularly as counselling centres could not support all the children. However, this was not mentioned by other participants and it was unclear if there were special schools nationwide.

Charity work	National	A large number of organisations were said by interviewees to be involved in anti-bullying work. The representatives from the children's charity talked about their charity having their own centres to support both victims and perpetrators of school violence. It appeared that schools or students could also contact the charity when an incident occurred or bullying was reported and the charity would perform crisis intervention. A charity worker would go to the school and act as a mediator, to try and resolve the situation. Additionally, a regional education office anti-violence plan included five organisations which were running programmes to help perpetrators be good students, such as ONE STOP – a rape centre with an intervention programme specifically for perpetrators.
Sanctions or treatments	School	When bullying had occurred the perpetrators could be referred to the school committee responsible for dealing with these issues. The committee may require the pupil(s) to undertake voluntary work to help their fellow pupils, or refer them for psychological treatment. As described before the school could also involve the police, who could potentially sue the student(s).
Whole-class intervention	School	If a teacher noticed or discovered that a child was being bullied they may try to stop the bullying by actions such as promoting the value of diversity to the whole class.
Individual Intervention	School	It was frequently identified that bullying occurred because the victim was different in some way. To try to stop bullying from continuing a teacher may try to get the victim to change so that this difference was no longer present. For example, they may give them extra academic help so they performed better, talk to them about their appearance, or contact their family to let them know the pupil needed support changing.
Teacher use of violence	School	One teacher suggested that some teachers used physical violence to stop bullying from happening, and that if a teacher was seen as being strict in this way it would prevent further bullying, particularly physical bullying. The other teachers did not describe this but one did refer to a period in the past where there was a moral national crisis when people lost faith in schools, because of teacher violence. This teacher felt this contributed to the rise in anti-school violence/bullying action.

School transfer	School and National	One outcome mentioned by several participants was that the victim would transfer to another school. This appeared to be the pupil and their family's choice but could be supported by the school or regional office of education. One difficulty in this was that pupils were not allowed to transfer schools within the same region, so to move schools they would need to leave the region.
Peer support	School	Some examples of peer support being used to support victims of bullying are described below.

Examples of peer support reported by participants:

Peer Support Example	Level	Description given by participant(s)
College student mentoring	School and National	One teacher described a system which schools were encouraged to apply for government funding for, where college students would come to the school to tutor pupils. This was aimed at providing academic support, but the interviewee suggested that results showed this was ineffective and the real impact was in providing a socially supportive relationship and raising aspirations.
Counselling classrooms	School	One interviewee from the children's charity described a programme where students attended after-school clubs and were given training by specialist professionals to support other students. Originally this was supported by a youth counselling charity. As the participant suggested this programme was done by law, it is possible it was the same as the 'Wee Classes' described above as a reactive anti-bullying initiative.
Pilot peer listening programme	School	One teacher had been part of a pilot peer support scheme in their school in Seoul. This had involved social workers training pupils to be able to support others through listening to their problems. However the teacher was unaware of this being used in other schools or if it had continued.
Pupil pairing	School	Several participants described teachers asking other students to support a victim of bullying. This could be a class representative or a pupil who was especially helpful and not involved in bullying. The idea was to provide social support for the victim, and gradually encourage other pupils to become friends with them so they had a group of friends. One teacher described a system where teachers partner students apparently at random, but really with the intention of pairing students who need support with others who can help. However it was unclear what type of support this referred to.
Cyber support	National	The representatives for the children's charity described how young people had naturally begun supporting each other on the charity's website. Initially the website was intended for professionals to support young people, but they found that the children were sending each other supportive messages or asking others for ideas on what to do. Professionals still offer individual support in private messages through the website.

Mother-led peer support programme, run by charity	Regional	The representatives from the children's charity also described a peer support programme the charity was planning. The intention was to train the mothers of school children in peer support, and for the mothers to then train the pupils. This had not yet begun but they indicated that support from the mothers had been very high.
Peer support incorporated in anti-bullying intervention	Regional	One researcher was beginning an anti-bullying intervention project with schools, beginning with one or two interested schools and then potentially spreading the programme to more schools. One outcome anticipated was the use of peer support, which was described as appropriate for the elementary school pupils being targeted. The suggestion was that simple, counselling style peer support would work well with this age group.

Appendix III: Social Competence Questionnaire

The Social Competence Questionnaire was used in Case Study Two with peer supporters and a group of matched controls. It consists of three separate measures intended to survey aspects of general social competence:

1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) – Part Two of the questionnaire
2. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) – Four subscales (Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Peer Problems and Prosocial) were used in Part Three of the questionnaire
3. Coping with Disagreements Questionnaire – Used in Part Four of the questionnaire. The development of this scale is described in Chapter Six. It includes eight subscales (Persuasion, Compromise, Obliging, Social Support, Distraction, Avoidance, Anger and Violence)

PEER MENTORING STUDY

Year Ten Questionnaire

Your school has set up a Peer Mentoring scheme and is taking part in a study to help ChildLine find out how Peer Mentoring schemes work in schools. ChildLine is working with your school to develop the scheme and train pupils to become Peer Mentors.

We would like you to answer this short questionnaire on your general feelings about yourself and how you get on with other people. We are asking pupils who are Peer Mentors and some pupils who aren't to fill in this questionnaire. We will ask you to fill this in again in June or July, to help us find out if the Peer Mentors training has any benefits for those who take part.

This questionnaire asks you to give your name, this is so that when we ask you to complete this questionnaire again we can put your answers together. However, all of your answers will be kept confidential - they will only be known by the researchers of the study and not by anybody at your school.

This questionnaire is in four parts. If there is a question you don't want to answer just leave it blank.

Part One

Please tell us some information about yourself.

Your name: _____ Are you a: Girl or Boy (please tick)

Your school: _____ Your Year Group: _____

Are you a Peer Mentor? (please tick)

Yes

No

Have you attended any Peer Mentor training? (please tick all that apply)

Yes, run by my school

Yes, run by ChildLine (CHIPS)

I am going to a training session soon

No, not at all

Please turn over for Part Two

Part Two

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please circle the response that most closely matches your view on each statement.

1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I take a positive attitude towards myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. At times I think that I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please go to the next page for Part Three

Part Three

Below is a list of statements about your personal feelings and how you get on with others. Please circle the response that most closely matches your view on each statement. **Please give your answers based on how things have been for you in the last 6 months.**

1. I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

2. I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

3. I get very angry and often lose my temper.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

4. I usually share with others (food, games, pens etc).

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

5. I am usually on my own. I generally keep to myself.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

6. I usually do as I am told.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

7. I worry a lot.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

8. I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

9. I have one good friend or more.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

10. I am often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

Part Three continues on the other side

11. I fight a lot.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

12. Other people my age generally like me.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

13. I am nervous in new situations. I easily lose confidence.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

14. I am kind to younger children.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

15. I am often accused of lying or cheating.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

16. Other young people pick on me or bully me.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

17. I often volunteer to help others (parents, teachers, young people).

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

18. I take things that are not mine.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

19. I get on better with adults than with people my own age.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

20. I have many fears, I am easily scared.

Certainly True Somewhat True Not True

Please go to the next page for Part Four

Part Four

Below is a list of things that you may do when you have a disagreement with another young person around the same age as you. Please circle the response that most closely describes how often you have done each thing **in the last 6 months**.

1. Try to reason with them

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

2. Walk away and discuss it later

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

3. Talk to a friend

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

4. Get angry and walk away

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

5. Get mad and throw something

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

6. Try to avoid talking about it

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

7. Put the other person's needs first

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

8. Tell myself it is not important

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

9. Get angry and yell

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

10. Push/shove/grab/hit the other person

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

Part Four continues on the other side

11. Get information to back up my side of things

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

12. Try to work out a compromise

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

13. Talk to a teacher

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

14. Give in to what the other person wants

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

15. Try to be funny and make light of it

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

16. Hurt the other person's feelings

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

17. Clam up and hold my feelings inside

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

18. Ask someone else to help

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

19. Insult or swear at the other person

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

20. Use complimentary tactics to win them over

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

21. Distract myself or the other person through entertainment or relaxation

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

Please go to the next page for the end of Part Four

22. Listen and try to understand

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

23. Talk to a parent or another family member

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

24. Apologise to the other person

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

25. Be sarcastic

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

26. Persuade them that I am right

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

27. Get back at them in some way

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

28. Try to discuss the issue relatively calmly

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

29. Get cool and distant/Give cold shoulder

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

30. Watch TV or play video games

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

31. Bring in someone to back up my point of view

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

32. Agree with what the other person says

Often Sometimes Occasionally Never

Thank you very much for your help!

Appendix IV: The ChildLine in Partnerships (CHIPS) Peer Support Programme

CHIPS works with schools in England, Ireland and Wales to provide a range of services. At the time the case studies in this thesis were conducted this included working with schools to develop peer support schemes, but this is now no longer a key part of their work. In Scotland, ChildLine's training and outreach programme fulfils the same functions.

CHIPS made available a range of materials for schools on peer support. It emphasised that children can be active participants in changing their lives, have the right to be heard and can help each other (ChildLine, 2005). These materials said that peer support could have substantial benefits for schools. Benefits were outlined for four areas:

- i. Pupils with problems
- ii. Pupils trained as peer supporters
- iii. Teachers and staff
- iv. Whole school experience

CHIPS focused on three types of peer support: peer mediation, befriending and peer listening. However, other types were acknowledged. A key message emphasised was that a one size fits all approach does not work – peer support should be tailored for individual schools. CHIPS provided both staff and pupil training:

- i. Staff training – staff involved in peer support should attend training with CHIPS before work is done in schools. It asked schools to consider how the whole school, including management, would be involved, how they would recruit a representative group of peer supporters, how they would advertise the scheme, how they would support and supervise the peer supporters, and how the scheme will be monitored to ensure it is effective.
- ii. Pupil training – looked at core skills including: active listening, open-ended questions, problem solving, team building, confidentiality and child protection. The training day included a session at the end helping the pupils plan how they would like their peer support scheme to run. Schools were encouraged to have peer supporters that represented the student body rather than model, gifted and talented pupils. Importance was placed upon confidentiality, and ensuring peer supporters understood when they had to break this.

Within the booklet, 'Setting up a peer support scheme' (ChildLine, 2009) a number of practical issues for schools to consider were outlined. These included:

- i. Why the school needs a peer support scheme
- ii. What support structures already exist, and how peer support would complement these
- iii. Are pupils used to being consulted
- iv. What the aims are
- v. What the style of peer support will be
- vi. What resources are available
- vii. If there is a target group of pupils and/or peer supporters
- viii. What the time span is
- ix. How peer supporters will be recruited and selected
- x. The role of adults
- xi. How peer supporters will be supported
- xii. How confidentiality, and appropriate breaking of this, will be ensured
- xiii. Record keeping
- xiv. The role of peer supporters and its boundaries
- xv. How the scheme will be run
- xvi. How awareness will be raised
- xvii. The peer supporters' training needs
- xviii. Scheme monitoring and evaluation
- xix. Keeping staff and pupils motivated

Schools were further supported with a Peer Support Toolkit (NSPCC) which included a number of ideas and materials to help develop and sustain a scheme. Examples of materials schools could copy included: a needs analysis and action plan form, peer supporter application forms, and contracts (separate versions for primary and secondary schools). Other materials available were a peer supporter's handbook, a peer support supervision booklet and a quarterly CHIPS magazine for pupils.

Key materials

ChildLine. (2005). Every school should have one. ChildLine: London.

NSPCC. Peer Support Toolkit. ChildLine: London.

NSPCC. (2009). Setting up a peer support scheme. NSPCC: London.

Appendix V: Case Study One Pupil Peer Support Questionnaire

The Pupil Peer Support Questionnaire used in wave one of Case Study One is provided here. Some changes were made to this questionnaire to make questions suitable for use in waves two, three and four of the study.

PEER MENTORING STUDY

Pupil Questionnaire

Your school is setting up a Peer Mentoring scheme, where pupils will help other pupils at school, and is taking part in a study to help ChildLine find out how Peer Mentoring schemes work in schools. We are going to ask volunteers in your year what they think about the scheme at different times, as well as about bullying in your school. This will let us know what to suggest to other schools.

We would like you to answer this short questionnaire about what you think about your school having a Peer Mentoring scheme, and the questionnaire about what you think about bullying too.

Please *don't write your name* on the questionnaires. Your answers are anonymous because we want to know what you and others *really* think. If there is a question you don't want to answer just leave it blank.

Date:

Your Tutor Group:

Are you a: Girl or Boy (please tick)

Do you have any kind of learning support while you are at school? This could involve help from a classroom assistant.

Yes

No

1) Did you already know that there is going to be a Peer Mentoring scheme in your school?

Yes

No

Can you briefly describe what you know about the scheme? What do you think the aims of having the scheme are?

Please turn over

2) Would you know how to use it for yourself or a friend?

Yes

No

3) How have you heard about the Peer Mentoring scheme? (please tick all that apply)

I haven't heard about it

Through a friend

Through a teacher or member of staff

Saw a poster or leaflet

Through a school assembly

Other (please write)

4) Do you know anybody who you think might like to use the scheme in future?

Yes, more than one person

Yes, one person

No

5) Do you think it is a good idea to have this Peer Mentoring scheme in your school?

Yes

Not Sure

No

Can you briefly say why or why not?

6) What kind of things do you think people might go to the scheme to talk about?

7) Do you think this Peer Mentoring scheme would help to stop bullying in your school?

Yes

Not Sure

No

8) Do you think you might use the scheme in future?

No

Yes, once

Yes, more than once

9) Do you take part in any other school activities? (please tick all that apply)

No	School Council	Anti-Bullying Committee
Helping in the library	School Club	Red Cross First Aid
Other (please write)		

10) Do you have any further comments about your school setting up a Peer Mentoring scheme. Is there anything you would like to suggest or that you think wouldn't work?

Thank you very much for your help!

Your questionnaire and the questionnaire about bullying can both be put into the envelope marked 'Peer Mentoring Study'. You can give this into [PART OF SCHOOL].

Appendix VI: Anti-Bullying Alliance Questionnaire Children and Young People's Version

The below questionnaire was used in Case Studies One and Two. Question 5 was altered to allow pupils to select more than one answer in waves three and four of Case Study One, and for both waves of Case Study Two.

children & young people's questionnaire (short)



This questionnaire is about bullying. Bullying means people doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.

This is about what you think and what may have happened to you or others you know. You do not have to answer the questionnaire, and you can leave out questions if you wish. But your answers will be confidential – do NOT put your name on the questionnaire.

Please answer all questions as truthfully as possible. There is a pupil/student information sheet with this questionnaire, which you can keep or pass on to a friend.

First, tell us about yourself:

1:

I am a boy girl

2:

I am in Year _____

3: Do you have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or any form of disability?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

School/setting:

Your experiences of bullying in school

Tell us about any experiences you have of being bullied in the last 12 months.

4: Have you been bullied in school in the last 12 months?

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot

If you have answered NO, please go straight to Question 9.

If you have answered YES (either 'Yes, a little' or 'Yes, a lot'), please answer the following questions ticking whichever apply.

5: What form/s did the bullying take?

(tick one box)

- Physical
- Verbal
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding you)
- Cyberbullying
- Racist bullying
- Homophobic bullying

7: Who did you tell?

(you can tick more than one box)

- No-one
- A member of school staff
- A friend
- An older boy or girl
- My parent or carer
- Another adult
- My brother or sister
- A peer supporter/buddy/befriender/mentor
- I phoned a helpline

6: When did the bullying last happen?

(tick one box)

- In the last week
- In the last month
- In the last term
- In the last 12 months

8: What happened?

(you can tick more than one box)

- Something was done that stopped the bullying
- Something was done but it didn't stop the bullying
- Something was done but it made the bullying worse
- Nothing was done but the bullying stopped anyway
- Nothing was done and the bullying carried on

Your experiences of bullying outside school

9: Have you been bullied out of school during the last 12 months?

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot

If you have answered NO, please go straight to Question 12.

If you have answered YES (either 'Yes, a little' or 'Yes, a lot'), please answer the following questions ticking whichever apply.

10: Who did you tell?

(you can tick more than one box)

- No-one
- A member of school staff
- A friend
- An older boy or girl
- My parent or carer
- Another adult
- My brother or sister
- A peer supporter/buddy/befriender/mentor
- I phoned a helpline

11: What happened?

(you can tick more than one box)

- Something was done that stopped the bullying
- Something was done but it didn't stop the bullying
- Something was done but it made the bullying worse
- Nothing was done but the bullying stopped anyway
- Nothing was done and the bullying carried on

Have you witnessed bullying?

This section is about any bullying you may have seen during the last 12 months.

12: Have you seen any bullying in school in the last 12 months?

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot

13: Have you seen any bullying outside school in the last 12 months?

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot

Have you taken part in bullying?

Now a question about whether you have taken part in bullying someone else.

14: Have you bullied anyone in the last year in school?

(tick one box)

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot

About your school

Now a few questions about your school

15: Do you feel that your school is a happy and caring school?

- Yes, usually
- Yes, sometimes
- No

16: Do you feel safe at school?

- Yes
- Most of the time/most places
- No

17: Does your school seek and listen to the opinions of pupils?

- Yes, usually
- Yes, sometimes
- No

18: Have you ever been involved in or asked about your school's Anti-Bullying Policy?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

19: Does your school do anything to mark National Anti-Bullying Week?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

20: Tick which of these things you know your school has or does to prevent bullying or to support children and young people who are bullied.

(you may tick more than one box)

School Anti-Bullying Policy

(a written document with your school's methods of stopping bullying)

No Yes

Assemblies about bullying

(whole school assemblies where bullying is discussed)

No Yes

Classroom lessons about bullying

(talking about bullying with your class and teacher)

No Yes

Staff take bullying seriously

(if bullying happens, teachers/other staff take action to stop it)

No Yes

The school takes action against homophobic bullying

(staff respond to this kind of bullying)

No Yes

Posters or leaflets around the school

(giving information about bullying in corridors and classrooms)

No Yes

Playground work

(ways of making the playground safe from bullying, such as lunchtime supervisors)

No Yes

Peer supporters, buddies, befrienders, mentors

(older pupils are trained to help or support victims of bullying)

No Yes

Counselling

(someone with special training who can help both bullies and victims change their ways)

No Yes

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Funded by the Department for Education and Skills

Published by the National Children's Bureau on behalf of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7843 1901 Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 6053

Website: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk Email: aba@ncb.org.uk

NCB Registered Charity No: 258825

© NCB, 2007

Pupil/student information sheet

Please keep this or pass it to a friend

If you have a problem with any issues relating to bullying, please talk to someone. A teacher or headteacher will be able to help you. If your school has a peer-support scheme, you could use that. If you do not feel comfortable talking to someone in your school, you can talk to someone you can trust, a friend, parent or carer. They can come with you to talk to a teacher or someone else about the problem.

You can also call ChildLine free on 0800 1111; someone is there all the time and the number will not show up on the telephone bill. If you cannot get through the first time please try again.

If you have access to the internet you can go to the Anti-Bullying Alliance website which has a section headed 'Children' that will give you more information and advice on dealing with bullying.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

It is important to remember that bullying happens to many people, and you are not alone. There are people in your school and outside who can listen and offer advice.

REMEMBER: KEEPING QUIET ABOUT BULLYING ALLOWS IT TO GO ON

Appendix VII: Case Study Two Pupil Peer Support Questionnaire

The Pupil Peer Support Questionnaire used in wave one of Case Study Two is provided here. Some changes were made to this questionnaire to make questions suitable for use in waves two of the study.

PEER MENTORING STUDY

Pupil Questionnaire

Your school is setting up a Peer Mentoring scheme, where pupils will help other pupils at school, and is taking part in a study to help ChildLine find out how Peer Mentoring schemes work in schools. We are going to ask volunteers in your year what they think about the scheme at different times, as well as about bullying in your school. This will let us know what to suggest to other schools.

We would like you to answer this short questionnaire about what you think about your school having a Peer Mentoring scheme, and the questionnaire about what you think about bullying too.

Please *don't write your name* on the questionnaires. Your answers are anonymous because we want to know what you and others *really* think. If there is a question you don't want to answer just leave it blank.

Date:

Tutor Group:

Are you a: Girl or Boy (please circle)

Do you have any kind of learning support while you are at school? This could involve help from a Classroom Assistant or Learning Mentor.

Yes

No

1) Did you already know that there is going to be a Peer Mentoring scheme in your school?

Yes

No

Can you briefly describe what you know about the scheme? What do you think the aims of having the scheme are?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Please turn over

2) Would you know how to use it for yourself or a friend?

Yes

No

3) How have you heard about the Peer Mentoring scheme? (please tick all that apply)

I haven't heard about it

Through a friend

Through a teacher or member of staff

Saw a poster or leaflet

Through a school assembly

Other (please write).....

4) Do you know anybody who you think might like to use the scheme in future?

Yes, more than one person

Yes, one person

No

5) Do you think it is a good idea to have this Peer Mentoring scheme in your school?

Yes

Not Sure

No

Can you briefly say why or why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6) What kind of things do you think people might go to the scheme to talk about?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7) Do you think this Peer Mentoring scheme would help to stop bullying in your school?

Yes

Not Sure

No

8) Do you think you might use the scheme in future?

No Yes, once Yes, more than once

9) Do you take part in any other school activities? (please tick all that apply)

No School Council Pupil Voice
School Sports Club Non-sporting School Club

Other (please write).....

10) Do you feel that your school is a happy and caring school?

Yes, usually Yes, sometimes No

11) Do you feel safe at school?

Yes Yes, most times/places No

12) Does your school care for and support pupils who are worried, sad or upset?

Yes, usually Yes, sometimes No

13) Does your school seek and listen to the opinions of pupils?

Yes, usually Yes, sometimes No

14) Do you have good relationships with most of the teachers in your school?

Yes, usually Yes, sometimes No

15) Do you trust most adults in your school?

Yes, usually Yes, sometimes No

Please turn over

16) Do you have good relationships with the other students in your class?

Yes, usually

Yes, sometimes

No

17) Do you have good relationships with the other students in your school

Yes, usually

Yes, sometimes

No

18) Do you have any further comments about your school setting up a Peer Mentoring scheme? Is there anything you would like to suggest or that you think wouldn't work?

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Thank you very much for your help!

Your questionnaire and the questionnaire about bullying can either be given to [PART OF THE SCHOOL].

Appendix VIII: Ethical Practice in Case Studies One and Two

Working closely with the case study schools, and the NSPCC and ChildLine, over a long period of time presented some challenges in terms of maintaining objectivity and following ethical practice. The nature of issues which were present during the studies are described in detail below.

Case Study One

I conducted research with this school over 18 months. It must be acknowledged that I could not remain a completely impartial observer, having developed close working relationships with both the co-ordinator of the school's peer support scheme and with the CHIPS team.

Throughout it was necessary to maintain as impartial a viewpoint as possible in relation to the CHIPS work with the school. Prior to the research project, and throughout the study, I was also a volunteer counsellor with ChildLine meaning that I was linked with the organisation not just as a researcher. In addition it should be borne in mind, that the NSPCC, which runs ChildLine, part sponsored this PhD. Working with the regional CHIPS staff over two school years, including participating in the training days for peer supporters at the school and visiting the CHIPS office, enabled in-depth observation of the way they supported the school's peer support service. However, it was necessary to keep some professional distance to remain unbiased.

Similar challenges were involved in working with the school over two school years. Although there were two peer support co-ordinators at the school originally, from study wave two only one member of staff remained as co-ordinator. As reported in the findings of this study, the co-ordinator expressed a lack of support from other staff members and senior management throughout the study period. I perceived that during my visits to the school I provided some support and encouragement to the co-ordinator, giving a listening ear and an opportunity to reflect on how the scheme was progressing. Frequently I was asked what approaches any other schools I was working with were using, and for ideas on how to develop the service. Whilst I did not make suggestions for new directions for the school's peer support scheme, it must be acknowledged that I was in some ways an active participant in the scheme's development.

This was particularly apparent when descriptive feedback was provided from the research; following completion of study waves one and two, and then following completion of all four study waves. It was felt that participation in this study involved a lot of time and effort for the school, over a long period, and therefore participation should be of some benefit to them. Feedback from the study provided an extra level of evaluation and monitoring of their peer support service. This was in the form of a report

sent to both the school and the regional CHIPS co-ordinator, and a meeting held between myself, the school co-ordinator and the CHIPS co-ordinator. During the second feedback meeting the head of the CHIPS service, and a member of school staff who was becoming involved in peer support, also attended the meeting. As shall be seen in the findings there were both positive and more negative findings in the study, meaning that in some ways the feedback reports were discouraging for the school. The school co-ordinator was especially surprised at the levels of bullying reported and expressed disbelief, putting it down to pupils not having a full understanding of what counts as bullying. Further, she was particularly discouraged by the low levels of pupils who reported using the service.

It was difficult to present the less positive findings to both the school and CHIPS, although it was always emphasised that previous research has shown it takes a long time for peer support to become established in a school. During the feedback meetings the school co-ordinator was interested in looking at ideas for how to build upon the findings and develop the scheme. Ideas were discussed, meaning that the findings given halfway through the study had some impact upon the running of the peer support scheme during the second half of the study.

It was also agreed with the school that some feedback would be provided to staff, as well as parents and pupils targeted by the study and by the peer support service, in years 7, 8 and 9, halfway through the study. Information sheets were given out at the beginning of study wave two. This also provided a second opportunity for parents to withdraw their children from the study; for parents of the new year 7 pupils this was their first information about the ongoing study, and for parents of the older children it was considered that ongoing consent should not be assumed. Initial drafts of the information sheets were provided to the school, at which point I was asked to remove the information about levels of school bullying reported. The school was concerned that this would panic parents, and there was a sense that the levels misrepresented the school as having a problem with bullying. Although this meant that parents and pupils were not given full details of the main findings, I felt it was important that the school remained happy to participate in the study and that their judgement was accorded with.

Overall it would be appropriate to describe this study as 'action research' to a certain extent. The nature of my involvement as researcher is further considered during the discussion of the findings.

Further ethical challenges presented during the course of the study. Immediately prior to study wave three a second CHIPS training day was held for the pupils just beginning as peer supporters. I participated in this training day, as during the first one, to allow observation of the training provided and an opportunity to meet the

new peer supporters. During the course of this day two child protection issues were disclosed by pupils to the CHIPS member of staff and volunteer, and I was present on one of the occasions. Although CHIPS request that a member of staff be present at all times during the training, at both times the scheme co-ordinator was not present. The CHIPS staff member explained to the pupils that these issues were concerning and that they needed to make the school aware of them. The CHIPS staff member then supported the pupils in relating the issues to the scheme co-ordinator.

Following these incidents, the school senior management reviewed their procedures for outside adults working with their pupils. They instigated a new policy that a member of staff must be present at all times when a visitor was working with a pupil or group of pupils. This directly impacted upon the last two waves of my study, as a member of staff had to be present during all pupil interviews and focus groups. The result was that the pupils' comments would no longer be completely confidential from the school, going against the ethical procedures I had put in place for the study.

To ensure confidentiality as much as possible I discussed with the peer support scheme co-ordinator the need for staff not to participate in the interviews/focus groups. Therefore staff members carried out separate work during these sessions, sat aside, and had minimal engagement with myself and the pupils. As far as possible the scheme co-ordinator was not the staff member present. The staff member present was always a pastoral member of staff from the school's Pupil and Parent Services, so that the staff member would be familiar and pupils would be comfortable in their presence and feel able to give honest answers. In addition I outlined at the beginning of each interview or focus group that although a member of staff was present they were not participating and that whatever the pupils said would be kept confidential by both the staff member and myself.

Another ethical challenge occurred when I was contacted by a parent. On all information sheets I provided my contact details so that parents, pupils and staff could request further information about the study or withdraw at any point. During study wave three a parent contacted me via email raising concerns about whether the peer support scheme was the most appropriate way for bullying to be dealt with, although they felt it was quite a good thing. The parent detailed that their child had been bullied for some time, beginning in primary school, and that the school staff's responses had not been helpful. They felt that it would be hard to encourage children such as their child to use peer support, as the message they had previously received from the school was that they should not report bullying.

In my response I indicated sources of support for their child and for the parent, clearly defined what my role as a researcher was in relation to the peer support scheme, provided information on the training peer supporters had received and how

they would handle a child protection issue such as bullying, and indicated that they could contact the scheme co-ordinator for help or ask me to forward their email to the co-ordinator. This parent's email required me to respond in a sensitive way that promoted child safeguarding. It suggested that the school may indeed have a problem with bullying, in opposition to the views that staff had expressed to me. However I ensured that I kept the parent's email confidential and did not discuss it with staff.

Finally, I had some concerns whilst transcribing an interview with a peer supporter in the second period of the study. She briefly mentioned that she had mentored a teacher, but had not given details of what had been discussed and whether the teacher had seen them individually or a group of peer mentors. On reflection, I was concerned because this seemed unusual and not what the peer supporters had been trained for. I let the scheme co-ordinator know and she said she would talk to the peer mentors to check what had happened.

Despite the challenges outlined above, care was taken at all times to ensure this study was conducted in an ethical way, in accordance with the BPS ethical guidelines.

Case Study Two

I worked with the school in this study for six months. This was a shorter period than for Case Study One, but I did develop a close working relationship with the lead co-ordinator and thus could not remain a completely impartial observer. As in the previous study, the co-ordinating staff did look to me for ideas and input on the peer support service, but to a lesser extent and I did not in any way direct the scheme's development. However, I did provide feedback to school staff from the study and it is possible that this influenced scheme development after the study. Again, it was difficult to present the less positive findings to the school but the co-ordinators took a constructive attitude and did not seem at all discouraged by these.

During this study I remained a ChildLine volunteer counsellor, and the NSPCC was still part sponsoring my PHD. It was necessary for me to again maintain as impartial a viewpoint as possible of the CHIPS service.

Overall, as in Case Study One, it would be appropriate to describe this study as 'action research', but to a much lesser extent than in the longer case study.