

**BULLYING IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL:
A CASE STUDY**

by

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Abstract: ***Bullying in a Primary School: a case study.*** ***Christopher Graham Lee***

Bullying has become a significant issue for schools and one that has attracted the media spotlight. It has also received considerable attention from the research community since the late 1980s following the tradition established through the work of many Scandinavian researchers. Much of the research has been longitudinal and sought to illuminate the experience of children who bullied or were being bullied. There has been considerably less research into teachers' and parents' understanding and experience of bullying between school children. This thesis seeks to rectify that situation by examining the views of Year 5 and 6 pupils, teachers and a sample of parents from a case study primary school. The research was conducted over a period of two years in a school referred to under the pseudonym *Nicholas Street*.

The thesis investigates three questions: first, the meaning that key parties attribute to the term bullying; second, the nature of their experience in the context of the school; and third, their views on how it is handled or resolved. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and re-interviews with teachers; unstructured and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and a selection 'game' with pupils and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with parents. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed onto a computer database (Hyperqual) and questionnaire responses from pupils were analysed with the support of computer technology (SPSS). The inductive analysis commenced with a case study of a single pupil, Lorraine. This provided the reference point for the structured analysis of bullying issues in the wider context of the school.

Findings include:

- the differing ways that bullying was defined by the parties;
- the emergent distinction between a relationship that was founded on bullying and an action that might be described as bullying;
- that bullying usually occurred between pupils in the same class and was not a clandestine activity nor unknown to non-participants (the secretive image);
- that, although there was a degree of satisfaction reported by all parties concerning methods deployed in handling bullying, there was also inconsistency, confusion and a lack of awareness of policy.

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List of Abbreviations

ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
LEA	Local Education Authority
MTAs	Mealtime Assistants
NCPTA	National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SCRE	Scottish Council for Research in Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TES	Times Educational Supplement

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has Chris Lee been registered for any other University award.

This study was financed by the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom, and undertaken as an extension of my work as lecturer within the Faculty of Arts and Education in Exmouth, Devon, using a single primary school for the case study.

Relevant research seminars at the Faculty of Arts and Education and conferences at the University of Lancaster and University of Bath were attended. Papers were presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference at the University of Lancaster and an international conference at the University of West Bohemia in the Czech Republic in September 2000. A book arising from the research is currently in press and will be published by a Local Education Authority.

Signed *C. Lee*

Date..... *27/02/02*

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an exploration of the findings on the subject of bullying amongst pupils from a case study of one primary school, to be known as Nicholas Street School. It is an account of the views and understanding of bullying based on data gathered over a two-year period from four classes of pupils, their class teachers, the other teachers in the school and some parents.

The formal data gathering was through interviews and questionnaires, although additional material from pupils has been accumulated through an experiential session that I entitled the 'Bullying Definition Game' and will usually be referred to as the 'game'. Limited field notes were made throughout some aspects of the data collection process.

The format of data gathering was agreed with the Headteacher and confirmed by staff and governors of the school. Fourteen teaching staff, including the Headteacher, were interviewed twice with each interview lasting about an hour. Although all parents were invited to participate in the research only the parent or parents of thirty children agreed to be involved. This resulted in data collected from fifteen semi-structured interviews of which seven were conducted with both parents present and, of the remaining eight, only the mother contributed. A further fifteen parents amplified data from this sector by completing questionnaires. The Mealtime Assistants (MTAs) declined the opportunity to be interviewed individually, but elected to meet with me for a long 'one off' informal group interview.

Following a period of non-participant observation and familiarising myself with each of the four classes, semi-structured interviews were held with all Year 5 and 6 pupils of the 1994-95 cohort with a selected few having second interviews. The data were enhanced by questionnaires completed by all Year 5 and 6 pupils from the 1995-96 cohort and the 'game' undertaken by groups of three or five pupils.

1:1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The history of bullying in school may be as long as the history of schools (Smith and Sharp, 1994, p.xi). However, the subject has only relatively recently become part of the agenda for discussion and debate in schools. What follows is an attempt to distinguish the principal reasons for the development of interest in bullying as a contemporary public concern and research focus.

From nineteenth century literature we find that the Victorian public school was a place where bullying was a regular feature of daily life. The experiences of *Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1838) and the permitted violence of *Flashman* (Hughes, 1857) illustrated that cruelty between pupils, and from adults to pupils, was a subject that could arouse concern in literary circles. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked a time when bullying was 'inevitable, continuous and fiendish' (Gathorne-Hardy, 1977, p.60) and where boys were subject to corporal punishments, which included bullying, that should be 'bravely received' (Usborne, 1977, p.137).

... a bully could terrorize a junior under any regime, while a boy with a kindly master could find fagging tolerable, or even enjoyable. Fags themselves reacted differently, of course. A sullen, unwilling boy could well invite bullying; a dreamy, unathletic youngster might be forever at odds with his stern environment. Perhaps it is no accident that literary men seem so frequently to have been unhappy at school.

(Falkus, 1997, p.65)

Falkus's descriptions of victims were to prove timeless in the context of the case study pupils discussed later in this thesis. The association of bullying with the private education system may well have been a contributory factor in determining that it remained a largely unexplored issue in the state school system in Britain until late 1980's.

Somewhat more recently childhood bullying and aggression between children have been considered through *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954) and in children's fiction, for example, *The Angel of Nitshill Road* (Fine, 1992) indeed the last ten years has seen a rapid rise in such literature (Stones, 1998).

1:1(i) The Academic Community

The attention of educationalists and researchers to school based bullying has been relatively recent. Contemporary awareness owes much to work from Scandinavia, notably Heinemann, Roland and Olweus, where Munthe (1989, p.66) suggests the 'long tradition of welfare and of common concern among the inhabitants' rendered it fertile ground for interest from other nations. Roland (1993, p.15) mentions a 'developing tradition of research and management', citing innovative publications of Heinemann in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The works of Roland, alongside those of Olweus, were inspirational in leading to the first international

conference on bullying held in Stavanger in 1987. Armed with extensive research evidence, they drew attention to the impact and incidence levels of bullying and they were to generate interest and influence research undertaken in other countries, including other European nations, Australia, the United States of America and Japan. The questionnaires developed by Olweus were translated and used in a piece of research funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation (Ahmad et al., 1991) which, in turn, supported and informed the DfE (Department for Education) funded study, the 'Sheffield Project' (Smith et al., 1999b).

Prior to the relatively recent increase in articles, papers and books that began in the late 1980s, the subject of bullying generated negligible interest amongst researchers and teachers in the United Kingdom. Little work had been undertaken to follow up the ideas first broached by Lowenstein in his investigation into 'the Bully' (Lowenstein, 1978a) and the 'Bullied' and 'Non-Bullied' (Lowenstein, 1978b), which stand out as the first attempts at gathering of empirical data on the subject in this country. His work, across a range of ages and types of school, concentrated on building psychological profiles of perpetrators, those who were bullied and those seemingly not involved. It conveyed a triadic structure, 'bully', 'victim' and 'non-involved' that was to be revealed as something of a simplification by Besag (1989), Olweus (1993) and Stephenson and Smith (1987) who distinguished identifiable sub-groups within 'bully' and 'victim' typologies.

One earlier piece of writing was Laslett's (1982) reflective account of the setting up of a children's 'Court' to deal with incidents of bullying in a special school for pupils labelled as 'maladjusted'. He related little of the school context but offered a narrative about the

formative days of this specific way of managing bullying incidents. Like Lowenstein, his article was isolated from the large-scale research being undertaken in Scandinavia. However, unlike Lowenstein, and indeed much of the research into bullying that ensued, he attempted to relate bullying to a broader consideration of theories of behaviour management. Laslett drew upon the ideas of Glasser (1969), acknowledging that pupils possess degrees of control over what happens to them and a capacity to make choices. In his work the analytic tools of the psychologist were deployed, but the culture of the school and attempts to relate bullying to that culture were not explored.

Nonetheless, the works of Laslett and Lowenstein represented little more than an outcropping of curiosity about the subject of bullying. Tattum (1989) drew attention to the dearth of interest into bullying, noting that the journal *Pastoral Care in Education* had not published a single article focused on the subject in its first six years of publication beginning in 1983. The references section of this thesis testifies to a change in that particular journal's record of publication. However, it would appear that the number of articles on bullying peaked in the mid-1990s, which was when the subject of bullying in schools appeared to be very topical and data for this thesis were collected.

The publication of a number of key texts in the late 1980s (Besag, 1989; Roland and Munthe, 1989; Tattum and Lane, 1989) served to raise awareness of bullying for teachers and a broader educational world. Given the scarcity of investigation and writing prior to the late 1980's, it came as little surprise that within these early major works there were assumptions that appeared to have been taken for granted, for example the secretive nature of bullying. It was

seen as part of a private world, 'one of the dark, hidden areas of social interaction ... which has thrived on a bed of secrecy and which has been neglected by professional investigation' (Besag, 1989, p.1). Certainly the latter point was well made and Besag's writings, like the others mentioned above, rectified the situation and helped to render the subject more public. In the intimate society of a primary school the idea of such a powerful phenomenon being secretive appeared to be hard to sustain, yet despite encouragement to 'tell' or be open, not all incidents appeared to have been reported to teachers (Mooney et al., 1991, p.108).

The subject of bullying in schools had arrived on the international stage and was to receive widespread attention from the academic community (Roland and Munthe, 1989; Smith et al., 1999). Both American and Australian researchers published abundant evidence that the research community was contributing to, indeed an integral part of, the rising attention given to the subject. From the United States Hoover, Hazler and Oliver have been the principal contributors (Hazler, 1994; Hazler, Hoover and Oliver 1991 and 1992; Hoover and Hazler, 1991; Hoover, Oliver and Hazler, 1992; Hoover, Oliver and Thomson, 1993; Oliver, Hoover and Hazler 1994; Oliver, Young and LaSalle, 1994). Similarly key figures from Australia, Ken Rigby and Roger Slee have made major contributions (Rigby and Slee 1991a, 1991b and 1993; Slee 1993 and 1995, Slee and Rigby 1993a, 1993b and 1994). Rigby and Slee (1991a) have offered a less orthodox perspective with their speculation that contemporary interest in bullying derived from increased sensitivity towards sexual harassment from a feminist perspective.

1:1(ii) The Media

The movement from the private concern of the academic community to the expanding public agenda was informed by a variety of factors including the press reporting of high profile individual tragedies or near tragedies, such as that of:

- Vijay Singh, who committed suicide and attributed his distress to bullying from his peers (Utley, (1996) *Daily Telegraph*, 17/10/96).
- Jamie Evans (Unknown author, *Daily Mail*, 10/12/97).
- Simon Hanson (Press (1996) *The Observer*, 10/3/96).

The subject has continued to attract the attention of the national press and the professional educational press have consistently raised the subject in a number of contexts.

A further impetus for engaging the subject has been a growing analysis and application of the term ‘bullying’ in broader contexts such as industry, commerce and the armed forces. This extension of media interest in Britain culminated in a series of television programmes entitled ‘Bullying: a Survival Guide’ broadcast in August 1997 by the BBC. In all there were 11 programmes and I worked with the producers on specific programmes entitled ‘The Bully’ and ‘Bullying in the Secondary School’.

1:1(iii) Government Initiatives

A further source of growing professional and public awareness may have been the mention made of bullying in the Elton Report, which stated that ‘recent studies of bullying in schools suggest that the problem is widespread and tends to be ignored by teachers’ (DES, 1989, p.102). The Report advocated that headteachers and staff should ‘deal firmly with all such behaviour; and take action based on clear rules that are backed by appropriate sanctions and systems to protect and support victims’ (DES, 1989, p.103).

No longer was the subject to remain unexplored and an embryonic political initiative had been set in motion. There followed a major research project undertaken by Sheffield University, culminating in a folder of advice and research evidence being sent to all schools in England and Wales (DfE, 1994a). Scotland also produced data and advice for schools through the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) (Johnstone et al., 1992) and many other countries were to replicate paths carved out by the original Scandinavian research.

A subsequent source of opening up the issue for schools has been through the inspection process. School inspectors working for the Offices for Standards in Education, ‘Ofsted’, have been required to look for evidence of bullying (Ofsted, 1994, p.20). In revised guidance Ofsted (1995, p.62) were to use the terms ‘harassment or bullying’, perhaps hinting at definition problems. I shall return to this important question of definition.

1:1(iv) A Broadening Public Concern

The formation of various interest groups and a consideration of the issue of bullying in other areas of society were part of an expanding concern. During the late 1980s the 'Anti-Bullying Campaign', a parent action group, was set up, the charity 'Kidscape' developed advice materials for parents, schools and the wider academic community (Elliott, 1990) and 'Childline', a telephone counselling service, played an active part in revealing the extensive nature of the problem. These were by no means the only sources of advice and support that became available to the public and the arrival of the Internet has permitted a plethora of sites offering information and advice.

If the bullying phenomenon was initially explored in relation to pupils in schools, in the 1990s it became a subject that prompted a wider spectrum of interest and developed into a concern that stepped beyond pupils' relationships to the broader fields of education. For example, the term 'bullying' has been applied to the actions of pupils towards their teachers (Terry, 1998). Research has indicated that 91% of teachers in an Inner London school reported being bullied by pupils at some time in their teaching career (Pervin and Turner, 1998, p.4). 'Bullying' was used to describe the dominance of particular headteachers over teaching staff (Adams, 1993) and conflicts within the teaching profession at a variety of levels (Sharron, 1996).

Research into the phenomenon has spread beyond the classroom and the topic has been examined amongst other societal groups and occupations (Schuster, 1996). Bullying in prisons has been explored and links between school bullying and criminality have been noted

(Devlin, 1995; Lane, 1989b). Consequently the term ‘bullying’ has been employed to describe a wide spectrum of interactions, relationships and structures in an assortment of organisations and contexts. It has become a more generic term that embraces a variety of forms of abuse and therefore may have extended beyond the meaning that was attributed to it by initial researchers cited here.

1:2 EARLY CONCERNS

At the time of the formulation of ideas for this thesis, writers on bullying may have been justified in referring to it as ‘one of those hidden subjects’ (Lane, 1992, p.140) yet, through the public forums mentioned above, its clandestine nature was beginning to change. By the late 1980s, as the issue of bullying moved from the private to the public arenas, there were opportunities to share good practice but there were also some problems beginning to develop. Through my own research for another project (Lee, 1993) I began to develop concerns that were to inform the development of this thesis. In the early 1990s I undertook a piece of research into pupil perceptions of bullying in the final year of the primary age phase and the first two years of secondary schooling. During the data gathering, which was principally quantitative, I recall administering a questionnaire with a group of Year 6 pupils in a primary school. I began the process of requiring pupils to complete my questionnaires by focusing their thoughts on my definition of bullying. At the time, this was what I believed bullying to be and it provided respondents with a seemingly easily understood, accessible, all embracing framework (Appendix 1). Having completed the questionnaire, one participant came up to me and related that he had been bullied but had not ‘ticked that box’ because his experience had

not been embraced by my given definition. Herein was the embryo of this thesis, for I began to raise questions about pupils' understanding of terminology and the relationship between experience and that understanding. If there was a tension between the pupils and myself in the construction of our ideas, was it located in my role as a teacher or as an adult or, perhaps more significantly, was there a shared understanding? I was beginning to formulate an initial key research question through what Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.38) identify as part of 'grounded theory'. It can be summarized as an examination of the dissonance and commonality in the understanding and experience of bullying in a primary school amongst the key players, in this case the pupils, the parents and the teachers.

My previous research had then left me with a number of unanswered questions about the subject and these were to inform the initial stages of this research. At the outset key issues included the following:

- 1) Much of the early research into bullying had, like my own, spread across a range of ages and schools. It had been principally about participants, the bully and the victim, and less about the wider school population or the school culture. Indeed, much research has been described as being 'bully-victim' (Charach et al., 1993, p.12). Less attention has been accorded those children who may not be directly involved (Roland, 1989, p.150), teachers and parents. There also appeared to be a relative paucity of research that relates bullying to the broader context of the school. These studies had been large scale, across a variety of schools and 'quantitative in nature, restricting depth and insight' (Torrance, 1997, p.159). They lacked reflection on the school

context, the classroom and the interaction between negative behaviour and relationships and the systems in which they exist.

- 2) The playground has been thought of as the place where negative feelings were acted out and little consideration was given to the classroom and, in that context, the understanding and experience of teachers.
- 3) Although data in my early work were evaluated in year groups, it was evident that the pupils in certain primary schools were reporting higher incidence levels. I began to ask questions about the impact of the school culture, the attitude of teachers and the value of incidence levels.
- 4) Parents were often mentioned in response to questions about support and advice when they were informed about bullying by their children yet there appeared little written about their views. In much of the literature, both parents and teachers have been recommended to become aware of bullying and encouraged to take incidents seriously. These writings concentrated more on recommendations, usually about identification and subsequent courses of action (Elliott, 1997d; Herbert, 1996; Lawson, 1994), and less on empirical data gathered to determine the views of these potentially key parties.

The willingness of the children in my previous research to share their experiences openly with an outsider had been apparent, even in a survey through anonymous questionnaires, mirroring other positive responses to data gathering (Smith and Thompson, 1991, p.2). What I felt was

needed was an opportunity to gain deeper and richer insights into the experience of children in a school, not from the synoptic stance of a transient seeker of information, but from the closer perspective of a hopefully trusted adult.

I also wanted to try to engage with the notion that children constitute a social group whose 'interests are not necessarily ... coterminous with the values of the home and the school' (Hood et al., 1996, p.118). Throughout the literature on bullying there seems to be an assumption that all key players share an outrage about bullying between children, with the possible exception of those who choose to bully. I intended to discover how children in the case study school viewed this phenomenon and whether their teachers and the parents shared their views.

In addition to those mentioned above there was a further area that informed the formative period of this thesis. From the early stages of the Scandinavian research a semantic problem was evident in that the aggressive acts undertaken by groups were given one name, 'mobbing', and the word 'bullying' was reserved for similar acts perpetrated by individuals. It has been suggested that such distinctions may be in line with linguistic roots, ie the bully being a 'brutal guy' and a mob being a 'rabble who gang up' (Schuster, 1996, p.297). Heinemann used the phrase 'mobbing', borrowed from Lorenz, to describe attacks by groups on single individuals who had 'disturbed' the group (Lorenz, 1966, p.19). The attack was considered as 'accidental' (Roland, 1993, p.16) and the attacked pupil was a 'deviant' individual who had in some ways upset individuals in the group or the equilibrium of the group (Ross, 1996 p.19). In contrast Roland, (1993, p.16) has suggested that arguments that bullying was somewhat arbitrary were

not sustainable in contemporary understanding, advocating that it should be understood to be both long-standing and also conducted by those in possession of power over those who have little capacity to respond.

Further problems associated with differential terminology centre on methods of dealing with bullying. Olweus (1978) recognised that Heinemann gave no precise definition of the term 'mobbing' and that groups who 'mobbed' could be constituted in differing ways 'diverging considerably in size, degree of cohesion, emotional state and attitudes' (Olweus, 1978, p.3). Later he was to acknowledge that 'bullying' might be a more appropriate term to employ (1984, p.57), embracing the need for actions undertaken by an individual student against 'victimised' others within the one term. Olweus (1993, p.413) went on to state that 'it is natural to regard bullying from a single student and from a group as closely related phenomena - even if there may be some differences between them.' In contrast a distinction between the two has been seen as paramount by Pikas, who has proposed that there was no justification for subsuming the forms into one term based upon the need for differing approaches to their resolution. He argued that groups possess a 'collective mind' that demanded specific approaches (Pikas, 1989b, p.93). In addition to attempts to distinguish between group and individual bullying, definitions have also incorporated psychological as well as physical forms of aggressive behaviour. Little research exists into the understanding of terms amongst key participants, or whether such consensus about definition is possible, yet the term has become used more openly in schools. Given the more liberal usage of the term what seemed significant was to explore the meaning attributed to it by those who experienced, observed or were aware of bullying.

The language associated with bullying, ie the word 'bullying' itself and the labels associated with key players, the 'bullies' and their 'victims', was emotive, perhaps stereotypical. It gave an impression that, if reported levels of bullying were accurate, schools would be almost filled with a mixture of relentlessly aggressive or passive ineffectual pupils. This analysis may be significant, not only in developing an understanding of bullying, but also in determining approaches and ideas adopted by schools in formulating anti-bullying strategies. For example, concentration on the bully and the victim distracts from the need for whole school approaches. This could lead to what Ross (1996, p.29) has called 'distortions', with bullies underplaying the damage they might be doing and victims exaggerating to 'put themselves in a better light' or a failure to report based on a fear of reprisal.

1:3 RESEARCH AREAS

The following were little more than a framework of broad areas that provided initial foci for the collection of data. They were influenced by the previously highlighted concerns arising from my own research and reflection.

Initially I developed three questions.

1) How did key players in a primary school define bullying?

‘How’ here meant not just arriving at a form of words that encapsulated meaning but also the thinking behind the definition and the terms that were employed within any given definition.

The search was for the:

- meaning ascribed to the term ‘bullying’ and what appeared to inform the thinking behind the definitions;
- component parts, which I have called ‘constructs’ or ‘strands’, within definitions;
- similarities, differences and tensions between and within the key groups.

As outlined earlier, bullying has usually been defined in previous research by an external agency with accompanying suppositions that readers and respondents shared that understanding. Even within the academic community itself there have been inconsistencies as to what constituted bullying (Appendix 1). There were often assumptions that any given

definition could provide a focus for the person whose views were being elicited and match both their experience and understanding.

A few writers have raised questions about the precision or accuracy of definitions of bullying (Arora, 1995; Stephenson and Smith, 1988). However, their views constitute a minority position. Rigby (1996, p.11) illustrates the dilemma as, in confirming the complexity of proffering definitions, nonetheless he proceeds to offer his own version, suggesting that bullying can be considered as ‘cruel and repeated oppression by the powerful over the powerless, without justification at all.’

2) What were the key players’ experiences of bullying?

Here ‘experiences’ might be seen not only as involvement in bullying but also as observation of incidents and awareness of relationships. The context of the primary school, with its relatively simple organisational structures and potential close proximity to parents, seemed to offer opportunities for exploration of the experiences of pupils, teachers and parents, with emphasis on the following areas. First, I wanted to examine whether the triadic ‘bully’, ‘victim’ and by implication ‘non-involved’ model (Byrne, 1994) best described the situation in the school. Images of the bully portray a secretive creature, possessing a capacity to arouse individual as well as societal hostility, and the victim, who generates concern, if not sympathy. There are also the non-involved who possess a capacity to remain distant or who may even be unaware that bullying exists. I was eager to explore whether pupils and teachers could

identify involved pupils and whether teachers perceived labels such as ‘bully’ as either desirable or helpful.

I also wanted to consider how pupils, parents and teachers articulated their experience, especially in terms of relationships and interactions that occur in the classroom. The bullying phenomenon has often been connected with areas often less associated with the supervision of adults such as the playground and the journey to and from school (Stephenson and Smith, 1987). The classroom and relationships made within the classroom have received less attention.

3) How was bullying dealt with and what were the opinions of key players about the efficacy of approaches?

The third area targeted the management of bullying in the school and how key players responded to it. Understanding bullying would appear to have probably only academic value if it did little to inform practice in countering it in schools. There have been a variety of specific anti-bullying strategies that have been proposed in the literature (Tattum and Herbert, 1993; Smith and Sharp, 1994) but few have been subject to rigorous research to determine their long-term impact.

In broad terms approaches to dealing with bullying in schools can be divided into two areas. The first concentrates on the raising of awareness in both adults and children. As such these demand whole school involvement and policy generation which have been broadly aimed at:

- a) Generating awareness either directly through focused awareness sessions for staff and pupils (Besag and Packer, 1992; Thompson and Arora, 1991) or more indirectly through the curriculum (Tattum and Herbert, 1993; Oliver, Young and LaSalle, 1994).
- b) Creating school policy, ethos and climate in which all parties understand the stance that has been adopted (Foster, Arora and Thompson, 1990; Galloway, 1994).
- c) Developing an openness concerning pupil willingness to tell and teacher preparedness to take incidents seriously.

The second approach looks to create reactive responses, including ways in which the victims might be supported or motivated to change and the bullies either punished or encouraged to alter or modify their behaviour (Maines and Robinson, 1992).

Galloway (1994) has declared that research into disruptive behaviour can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of bullying. Although it has been apparent in some strategies for countering bullying that broader theoretical frameworks existed, they have rarely been made explicit. Amongst the exceptions Pikas (1989, p.103) advocated that his 'Common Concern Method', later to become the 'Shared Concern Method', was a therapeutic approach, referring to it as 'mobbing therapy', and viewing the technique as a 'treatment'.

A further contextual point relating to policy and practice in dealing with bullying is that my experience of working with teachers and schools made me aware that schools have often

chosen to integrate their approach to bullying into a broader behaviour policy rather than make a distinct response to the issue. The pressure brought about by the need to meet the requirements of Her Majesty's Inspectorate may have led some schools to respond increasingly in the latter form and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 1998) now require specific policy statements on bullying from schools. At the time of the commencement of the data collection schools were beginning to respond to bullying as a separate matter and one that merited consideration as an issue in its own right.

During the embryonic stages of the research, I deliberately avoided being too precise about foci, recognising that the collection and analysis of data would be inductive and given the potential size of the database. Thus the above represented no more than three broad starting points. As the data collection progressed the issue of bullying was becoming much more of an open subject, and an idea whose 'time had come'. A fourth question emerged which can be summarised as 'what is the attitude of the key players to bullying and the contemporary interest in it?' Analysis of findings has been included in the section on how the school and its participants felt about the management of bullying (Section 4:4(i)).

To summarise, all too often bullying has been interpreted and understood solely through analysis of data supplied by the directly involved. There has been less consideration of the:

- classes in which the involved exist;
- whole school populations;
- teachers;
- headteachers and others with leadership responsibility;

- parents and guardians of the children;
- school, its structure and the structures within which it exists ie relationships with other schools.

This thesis is not an attempt to address all the above, indeed the list serves only to illustrate influences on the early part of the data collection.

I have argued that we have arrived at our current state of understanding of bullying in schools as a consequence of a variety of public and private sources of interest, perhaps originally inspired by Scandinavian research. It has led to the subject becoming one that schools have been compelled or inspired to address with the resultant open usage and common deployment of the term ‘bullying’. A growing, if not extensive, literature has informed this, yet there remain key unanswered questions.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW

2:1 DEFINITION

2:1(i) The Issue of Definition

In the context of defining bullying even the term ‘definition’ has assumed a breadth of meanings and therefore I am compelled to offer my definition of ‘definition’! I shall use the word to mean a sentence or few sentences that seek to encapsulate the precise meaning of a term. A definition generates boundaries and can by implication, or by direct reference, identify that which stands outside it.

As already mentioned, defining bullying at the outset has been a central feature of much of the research over the last ten years and researchers have used definitions that focus respondents on the researcher’s notions of what constitutes bullying. In this limited ‘tradition’, the pioneering work of Olweus (1993, p.11) was largely concerned with offering a definition deliberately aimed at providing boundaries for respondents, in order that they have ‘a clear understanding of what they are to respond to.’ Such definitions assumed that those completing questionnaires or responding in interviews understand and relate to that imposed definition. It was essential that they perceived their experiences of bullying as being within the preordained framework that the definition offered. This approach has not been without its critics. Cullingford and Brown (1995, p.12) have argued that ‘the problem with this method is that it begins with an assumption that the definitions used are accurate and will be agreed with by the children.’ Statements of what the researcher or author perceived bullying to be are neither all

embracing nor neutral as they reflect the values of those who possess the power to label or define (Lane, 1992, p.141). A vocabulary has developed that has permitted each writer to attribute meaning to the term 'bullying' by deconstructing it into its component parts such as 'intent' and 'hurt'. So often the meaning has arisen from writers' personal selection of strands, which may be related to their own ideas, culture and values.

Participants in this research were allowed to interpret the term 'bullying' in any way that they chose and no refinements or barriers to their ideas have been imposed. Indeed my aspiration in this thesis has been to seek what meaning the term 'bullying' has for all participating groups without imposing boundaries.

As a further dimension to this complex situation, various behaviours or actions associated with bullying have been categorised in the literature on the subject. These have been described as 'forms' of bullying (Rigby, 1996, p.20). Thus kicking, spitting, and hitting have been collectively categorised as the form of 'physical bullying'. These behaviours resemble a *description* or catalogue of actions, rather than a sentence or two that present a form of words embracing an author's understanding of the term, ie a *definition*. Some who have defined bullying have employed descriptions to develop other categories or 'forms' such as 'psychological', 'emotional' or 'verbal' (Besag, 1989, p.4). Randall (1996) has emphasised the difference between lists of behaviours that have been witnessed or experienced to which a generic label 'bullying' might apply and the definitions that have become commonplace in the literature. He added that '... all these descriptions do not actually tell us what bullying is - only how it is demonstrated (Randall, 1996, p.3).

Further forms of describing bullying have been proposed (Table 1). Olweus (1993, p.10) distinguished between 'direct' and 'indirect' bullying, such as exclusion and rumour spreading. Others have added further dimensions in which bullying assumes 'direct physical', 'direct verbal' or 'indirect aggression' forms (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992, p.55; Rivers and Smith, 1994, p.366). Bjorkqvist et al. (1992) detected a developmental element in that frequency levels of all forms of bullying peaked at about the age of 11 years and declined throughout adolescence. This was particularly marked in the case of behaviours such as kicking, but also formed a pattern replicated to a lesser degree in other forms.

Rigby (1996) has contributed an analysis in which he suggests there are two forms; 'malign' and 'non-malign' bullying. The essential difference between 'malign' and 'non-malign' centred on 'intention' and 'premeditation', whereas there was little that was deliberate about the hurt caused in his 'non-malign' bullying. He continued by advocating that 'non-malign' can be further subdivided into two; 'mindless' bullying, which is considered to be harmless by perpetrators, and 'educational' bullying, in which adults, such as teachers, cause hurt. Their motive was to correct errors in work, not to inflict pain, yet the student felt picked on. 'To those who practice - and even to some who observe it - the bullying may be seen as for the victim's good' (Rigby, 1996, p.18). In his distinction between forms of bullying he utilised what for him were key components, 'hurt' and 'intent', to inform meaning.

Table 1: Forms of Bullying			
<i>Authors</i>	<i>Form</i>		
Olweus D. (1993)	DIRECT <i>Face to face.</i>	INDIRECT <i>More subtle and usually involving third party, eg exclusion or rumour spreading.</i>	
Bjorkqvist K., Osterman K. Kaukiainen A. (1992)	DIRECT PHYSICAL <i>Punching, kicking and pushing.</i>	DIRECT VERBAL <i>Name calling.</i>	INDIRECT AGGRESSION <i>Rumours, social exclusion, anonymous notes.</i>
Rigby K. (1996)	MALIGN <i>Intended and premeditated.</i>	NON-MALIGN <i>'Mindless'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>considered by perpetrators to be harmless or just a game, little that was deliberate.</i> <i>'Educational'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>adults, such as teachers, have caused hurt yet their motive was to correct errors in work.</i> • <i>little that was deliberate.</i> 	

2:1(ii) Constructs or Strands

Throughout the thesis the differing component parts of definitions will be referred to as 'strands' or 'constructs' and this section explores the key aspects of what appears to be understood by the term 'bullying' in research literature through consideration of those component parts. Each discussion of a strand begins with a brief consideration of researcher/writer usage of the term prior to an examination of perspectives explored in the literature.

Before considering each construct individually, it is important to consider any functional, cultural or contextual factors that may have accounted for dissimilarities amongst authors in the deployment of strands.

Included in the list of definitions (Appendix 1) were those that:

- sought to focus readers on the writer's stance (Askew, 1989);
- were a modification of other researchers' or writers' standpoints (Rigby, 1996);
- drew upon a variety of sources to summarise for readers (Besag, 1989);
- were designed to provide supposed ease of understanding for respondents in research (Da Fonseca et al., 1989; Lee, 1993);
- have been developed as result of research and are a consequence of data gathering (Arora and Thompson, 1987).

Thirty-two definitions of bullying, from a variety of sources, were scrutinised and from them I generated a table (Appendix 2). The columns were headed by the key strands employed throughout this study (see Section 2:1(iv)) and each definition was broken down into those strands and located in the appropriate column. For example, Johnstone et al. (1992, p.3) advocate that 'bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else. To do this, the bully has to have some sort of power over the victim, a power not always recognisable to the teacher.' I considered 'wilful' to be a declaration of *intent*, 'desire to hurt' sufficient to merit inclusion in the *hurt* column and recognition of the significance of *power* clearly indicating its inclusion in that column. Allocating each construct to the appropriate cell has inevitably been a matter of personal interpretation and I acknowledge that others might construct such a chart differently.

This exercise has revealed that:

- a) there is a vocabulary shared by those who define bullying;
- b) there has been a lack of agreement and consistency about what constitutes bullying (Madsen, 1996);
- c) certain strands have been incorporated more than others eg hurt, intent and repetition.

It is hard not to conclude that the research community has demonstrated the complexity of definition with a resultant inconsistent picture. Ascertaining such a variety of definitions and variable deployment of strands results in my concurring with Munn (1999) and Madsen (1996) that there is lack of consensus in the literature as to what constitutes bullying. Consequently I have difficulty in agreeing with Slee and Rigby (1994, p.3) who state that 'bullying is a reliably identifiable sub-type of children's aggressive behaviour'. Certain constructs were frequently deployed, but not one version possessed all of them and, as discussed below, discussion and disagreement exists about each of them.

2:1(iii) Factors influencing definitions

Function

Definitions of bullying have served to provide insights into the boundaries that researchers have developed in seeking to distinguish between it and other forms of aggression (Olweus, 1999). Some have stepped beyond making sense of a complex interaction and assumed a

functional role by concentrating their audience on types of bullying. An example of this has been *Don't Suffer in Silence*, (DfE, 1994a), which contained the succinct, yet comprehensive:

It is deliberately, hurtful behaviour; it is repeated often over a period of time; it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

(DfE, 1994, p.7)

However, in the document's appendices, that contained materials to be employed in professional development in schools, a lengthy, highly detailed version was given.

A pupil is being bullied, or picked on, when another pupil, or a group of pupils, say nasty things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that.

These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the pupil being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a pupil is teased repeatedly in a nasty way.

However if two pupils of equal power or strength have an occasional fight or quarrel, this is not bullying.

(DfE, 1994a, p.131)

This version was almost indistinguishable from that which had been employed in data gathering projects (Ahmad, et al., 1991; Whitney and Smith, 1993). It appeared to be an attempt to devise an illustrative definition that concentrated pupils on the breadth of potential actions, including an uneven balance of power, the powerlessness of victims, 'nasty teasing' and repetition, although notions of intent and hurt were present only by implication.

A second example that considers the age of respondents in research comes from Canada. One of the original features of the Toronto Board of Education's (Ziegler and Rosenstein-Manner,

1991) investigation into bullying in their schools was the way that they sought to evaluate how children conceptualised bullying. In the case of the very young, story was used to prompt ideas and evidence emerged that they understood it in terms of physical aggression, rather than name-calling or verbal abuse. Where research was undertaken with pupils from 9 years of age onwards questionnaires were employed with no definitions being presented at the outset.

Cultural factors

Cultural effects may influence differences in understanding of the term 'bullying'. Scandinavian, British, American and other cultural groups have been listed (Appendix 1) and each may have specifically local factors that led to the selection of components. For example, in the United States, the term 'victimisation' has been used (Floyd, 1985; Hazler et al., 1991; Oliver et al., 1994b) and others have employed the potentially wider concept of 'peer aggression' (Perry et al., 1988). The concept of victimisation may, in incorporating the recipient of bullying within the description of the behaviour, place more significance on the understanding and experience of victims and less on the intent of perpetrators (Tattum, 1989).

As mentioned previously, another cultural phenomenon has been the use of the term 'mobbing' in Scandinavia, with its connotation of group aggravation, by such 'founding fathers' as Heinemann, Pikas, Roland and Olweus. Following observations of playground behaviour in 1969, Heinemann published his research into 'mobbing' (Munthe, 1989) where the focus was on *groups* of boys harassing individuals, rather than group on group or individual on individual. Other writers have emphasised the distinction between bullying and

mobbing, suggesting that the former could be undertaken by both individual children and groups, not just groups, (Ahmad et al., 1991) and that it was not a male preserve (Tattum, 1989).

Despite violent behaviour between pupils being reported in Spain and Portugal, they possessed no word for bullying (O'Moore, 1990). Da Fonseca et al., (1989) in researching incidence levels in Spain, were compelled to employ a definition to impose meaning for respondents before they could undertake their questionnaire based data gathering.

In Japan rising levels of violence among young people have led to 'Ijime' (bullying) receiving research attention (Prewitt, 1988). Schoolland (1986) drew attention to the violence and bullying perpetrated by teachers and, even, endorsed by a system that made too many demands upon students or turned a 'blind eye' to the brutality of staff. The focus on teachers as perpetrators represents a seemingly broader perspective than that adopted in other contemporary research. Where bullying between pupils was investigated, the definition made reference to 'formal' social groups. Here, perhaps, was acknowledgement of the potential for bullying to exist within the class and challenging its association with playground behaviour. There was also reference to an imbalance in power and status of the individuals involved (Kikkawa, 1987) which is discussed later.

Validity will always be a problem in comparing data between nations and this is further compounded by other factors, including differences in terminology, culture and tradition in researching bullying. Such matters have led Hoover et al. (1992, p.7) to suggest that

definitions of bullying can be said to have a phenomenological aspect and demand that we ask what interactions might pupils deem as warranting the term 'bullying'.

Context

Understanding the term bullying may be dependent upon the *context* in which the interaction occurs. For example, *ostracism* may be a by-product of naturally evolving friendship patterns or, alternatively, it could assume a sinister significance. Similarly much of the playful fighting, that might be regarded as 'rough and tumble' fighting by some, could be considered to be bullying by others (Boulton, 1994; Boulton, 1997).

It may well have been that factors such as culture have compelled much of the pioneering research to impose an understanding through preordained definitions of bullying. In the main, research has neglected the exploration of definitions from those people who have been at the epicentre of bullying in schools and those who often found themselves having to manage incidents and deal with the impact that they had, ie the pupils, their teachers and parents. The work of Arora and Thompson (1987) was a notable exception in that their definition was based on a form of words agreed between secondary age pupils and their teachers.

2:1(iv) A Personal Framework

The literature conveys a belief in the defining process, a confidence that an all-inclusive phrase, or set of phrases, can be found and that the component strands have been discernible to those whose opinions have been sought. When definitions, and the very 'constructs' that aim to provide clarity, are examined a prevailing common language, as well as a lack of shared understanding, becomes apparent. What emerges is a picture of inconsistency, with some strands more dominant and it is the deployment of similar terms, rather than a consistency of meaning, which has led to an impression of concordance in definition (Farrington, 1993).

In counselling against a simplistic view on defining bullying Tattum (1989) made an attempt to determine areas of complexity. He adopted a broad approach with discussion of the numbers involved, reflecting upon the Scandinavian mobbing/bullying distinction, the forms that bullying can take and even included the two strands of 'duration' and 'intent'. He added that the intensity of the attack needed consideration, as did the motivation of the perpetrator.

A more focused attempt to define bullying came from Farrington (1993), who identified six strands from research, which were later adopted by Madsen (1996, p.14). They were that bullying could:-

- be a physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation;
- be intended to cause fear, distress or harm to the victim;
- affect the victim, by causing fear, distress or harm;
- involve an imbalance of power;

- be unprovoked by the victim;
- be repeated between the same children over a long time period.

My own version, which draws upon Farrington's model, represents a comprehensive framework with which to examine issues related to definitions of bullying. I acknowledge that not all writers and researchers have employed the same strands and alternatives, employed in the published definitions of others, are bracketed. The alternatives may be words that are similar in meaning to the selected construct, although I recognise that there could be debate within these.

- 1) **Intent:** a premeditated desire to create an impact (deliberate, wilful, conscious).
- 2) **Hurt:** physical, psychological or social (distress, suffering, fear).
- 3) **Repetition:** the selection of a victim for more than a single act (frequently, continuous).
- 4) **Duration:** bullying actions which take place over time, but not necessarily a long period (longstanding).
- 5) **Power:** where the equality of power in a relationship or a group becomes imbalanced or 'asymmetric' (Olweus, 1993, p.10) (difficult, or unable to defend, belittling, references to less adequate children).
- 6) **Provocation:** whether the actions of the victim contributed to the bullying.

The above are not offered as a definition of bullying, but as a personal selection of the key strands to help to inform the remaining analysis. Among others considered were, first, 'premeditation', which was similar to 'intent', but possessed a temporal factor in that there was a period of deliberate, thoughtful, planning as well as there being a design to cause hurt. It had been rarely employed in definitions and resemblance to 'intent' may have accounted for this. Second was 'systematic' where the action of the perpetrator was neither random nor irregular but methodical and detached, yet this seemed closely entwined with ideas of 'intent', 'repetition' and even the rejected 'premeditation'. Where the term systematic has been employed in the definitions of others I have adopted the approach of Smith and Sharp (1994, p.2) and taken it to mean both deliberate and repeated. Third, the notion of 'potential gain' where the perpetrator gained at the expense of the victim was considered. Such gain would be tangible in the case of extortion, but may be more psychological or even social, where the bully was seeking to exclude, to present as a dominant character or as resistant to challenge and intimidation. Again this notion seemed to cross over into ideas of hurt, intent and imbalance of power, offering further verification of the complexity of the task of accurate definition. What follows is an examination of my chosen strands through the literature, beginning with the central idea of intent.

2:1(v) Individual Constructs

Intent

Randall (1996) has declared the centrality of intent to his understanding of bullying. In differentiating between bullying and other aggressive behaviours, he emphasised that aggression can exist without intent and might be refined by an acknowledgement of, and perhaps apology for, any hurt caused. He advocated that ‘bullies are always aggressive individuals who intend to cause pain or fear of pain’ (Randall, 1996, p.5). Similar enthusiasm for including intent has been found at a more school based level. In order to clarify matters in a school policy document, a headteacher, Derek Gillard, revised a previous definition to embrace intent following discussion with pupils and staff.

We agreed as a whole school that bullying was ‘any form of behaviour which causes unhappiness for another member of the school.’ Since then we have modified our definition to include the word ‘deliberately’ since intentionality is very much part of bullying.

(Gillard, 1994b, p.13)

The inclusion of intent may have aided clarity of definition but also could have generated a further predicament for examination of intention to hurt has been revealed as potentially problematic. Genuinely accidental hurt would not qualify as bullying, yet children and adults are faced with having to distinguish between accidents and those who bully invoking the unintentional as an excuse.

.... at a more phenomenological level there are also definitional problems in that while one participant in a particular interaction might regard himself or herself as being bullied, those that he or she regards as carrying out the bullying might define their behaviour as 'having a bit of fun'.

(Siann et al., 1993, p.308)

In discussion with bullies, Siann et al. (1993) discovered that they were not always aware of the degree of hurt caused by their actions. This was particularly the case when the focal point was non-physical forms of bullying. O'Moore (1995, p.56) found that it was not 'uncommon to hear children who bully or adults who recall their schooldays say that their intention was not to hurt the victim but simply to elicit the admiration or laughter of other children'. Oliver et al. (1994a) also referred to interpretations of intent by pupils, who felt that they were teasing harmlessly, but whose behaviour was interpreted as hurtful by their victims. The term 'teasing' also carries with it a range of meanings. It has a positive interpretation, but it may also offer an opportunity for perpetrators to hide their true intent and offer the excuse of 'only teasing'. Hence 'nasty teasing' has been employed in definitions to overcome this problem (Ahmad et al., 1991). Further confusion arises from O'Connor's whose unpublished survey that formed part of the Sheffield Project (*TES*, April 14, 1995) found that pupils reported unintentional acts as bullying.

Hurt

Of all my chosen strands I felt confident that there would be increased agreement, perhaps even unanimity, that hurt would be central to any definition. Even if it had not been included in all definitions, hurt would seem to be a key prerequisite of bullying and the reason for not including it would be that it was taken for granted. However, this was not to prove the case.

Lane's definition (1989b, p.96), referred to in the section on 'repetition', links 'hurt' and 'intent' as major components and concludes with the need to have corroboration that bullies intended to generate fear or the victim felt it. This view signifies a psychological, perhaps long-term impact, echoed in Lowenstein's (1978a, p.147) use of the term 'distress' with the onus on perpetrators admitting to the hurtful objective of their action. This returns to the intention of bullies, and not the outcome of their actions, for as Herbert's (1996) definition suggests perpetrators may not realise the impact of their action and the hurt caused.

'Hurt' implies that the responsibility for identifying an act as bullying falls on victims, in that intent to hurt may have been in the minds of bullies, but confirmation of bullying would only be by evidence that their behaviour generated fear or pain. This viewpoint is a component of the stance of Stephenson and Smith (1989, p.45) who believe that 'it is necessary that the victim experiences distress'. Although there is no mention of excusing or ignoring the actions of bullies, there is an implication in such thinking that intervention follows evidence of pain, distress or fear. In arguing for a broader conceptualisation of bullying, Cullingford and Morrison (1995) state that many children are involved in relationships that involve bullying and that the focus should be on the consequences for the victim rather than the behaviour of the bully. Bullying might then be defined by the hurt caused rather than the intent of perpetrators. This emphasis on impact was reiterated by Cullingford, in another co-authored article (Cullingford and Brown, 1995, p.11), although there was recognition that pain can 'be inflicted inadvertently. The question then is whether bullying needs to be defined as *intention* to cause hurt.' In recent times the centrality of consequential hurt has been echoed by press reports on guidelines issues by the National Association of Headteachers where it was quoted

that ‘if the recipient considers themselves to be bullied then bullying has *prima facie* taken place’ (Judd, *The Independent*, 2000, p.9). Placing the decision of whether an action is considered to be bullying solely with the victims invites potential problems, especially false accusations and assumes no provocation on the part of victims, which is discussed later in this chapter. Those entrusted with dealing with bullying incidents in schools might find that placing emphasis solely on expressions of hurt or fear experienced permitted a degree of flexibility that could be difficult to justify.

From realisation of hurt by perpetrators to evidence of pain in victims, emphasis has been placed upon the interpretation of individuals involved. Whatever the clarity of policy and definitions, those in schools who deal with bullying face the intricate task of listening to potentially contradictory notions of intent and hurt and taking action on that basis.

Repetition

Of the selected constructs ‘repetition’ demonstrates the disparity of views evidenced in the literature. Byrne suggests that bullying ‘lasts for weeks, months, even years. Therefore it does not include isolated incidents’ (Byrne, 1994, p.40). What was deemed to be bullying in the national ‘Guidelines’ developed in Ireland contained a definition that precluded isolated incidents from being described as bullying (O’Moore, 1995, p.56), supporting Besag’s (1989, p.4) view that ‘bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the *repeated* attack ... by those in a position of power’ (*my emphasis*). She argues that repetition should be considered a key feature as bullying not only caused immediate distress, but also provided a threat for the future and this notion of foreboding has been endorsed by Siann et al. (1993). A similar stance has

been adopted in the definition offered by Lane (1989b) who drew upon the legal definition of threatening behaviour:

Bullying is therefore taken to include any action or implied action, such as threats or violence, intended to cause fear and distress. Unlike the legal definition the behaviour had to be repeated on more than one occasion. The definition includes the concept of intention and therefore cannot be based simply on the observation of a teacher, but should include corroborative evidence that those involved intended or felt fear.

(Lane, 1989b, p.96)

Olweus (1993, p.9) used 'repeatedly and over time' as a means of excluding less serious events. The basis of his argument being that to 'exclude occasional non serious negative actions that are directed against one student at one time and against another on a different occasion.' The dilemma for those who seek to define bullying being illustrated by Olweus's (1993, p.9) recognition that 'a single instance of more serious harassment can be regarded as bullying under certain circumstances.' Seriousness, a highly qualitative notion, seemed to be the basis of the judgements being made here, but it was set in an argument about the more quantitative concept of repetition. Further support for the view that the term bullying should not be used for one-off acts of aggression has come from Robinson and Maines (1997).

Few writers have proposed that a single act should be considered as bullying. Amongst the exceptions Herbert (1996) offered a definition for parents that recognised that a single incidence could qualify as bullying and O'Connor (*TES*, April 14, 1995) used data derived from pupils and young adults to conclude that actions need not be repeated for those groups to consider them as bullying. Randall has also supported the idea that a single incident could constitute bullying with the qualification that:

It is the fear of repeated aggression that is important, not the actual incidence. This is true in many cases as victims often point out, but this is more a characteristic of victims and their understanding of bullies' personalities than that of the behaviour itself.

(Randall, 1996, p.5)

The juxtaposition of 'nasty' and 'teasing' by Ahmad et al.(1991, p.105), mentioned in the section on intent, was further modified by the addition of 'repeatedly'.

Research with younger pupils noted a similar breadth of view in their respondents, adding that 'one-off' incidents 'would not normally be defined as bullying by adults' (Smith and Levan, 1995, p.498). In this context 'adults' may have meant the research community of adults who investigate bullying since little data exists regarding how teachers and parents conceptualise bullying. Smith and Levan argued that:

It is now a strong hypothesis that an over-extensive definition of bullying in younger children, including non-repeated and possibly non-imbalanced episodes of fighting or other aggression or unpleasant behaviour, can explain much of the age-related reduction in reports of being bullied. This points to the importance of investigations of bullying in younger children, and of the need to study changes in perceptions and definitions of bullying from early school age to childhood.

(Smith and Levan, 1995, p.499)

The final sentence of the above underlines the significance of understanding how pupils define bullying and employ the term bullying and how their interpretations relate to the views of adults.

Duration

Repetition and duration appear closely linked since, for an incident to be repeated, a period of time must have elapsed. In this context, duration implies something more long standing. Temporal barriers have formed part of the debate over the meaning of bullying, although few have gone as far as Lowenstein (1978a) who imposed a six month period on the duration of events before the term 'bullying' could be invoked. In sharp contrast the experience of participants expressed in La Fontaine's (1991) analysis of telephone calls from a 'bullying hotline' revealed that the hurt felt by victims of bullying need not have resulted from actions that took place over a period of time. Ross (1996) has argued that it should be a qualitative evaluation of an incident itself, rather than whether a period of time had elapsed, that determines if merits being considered as bullying, which supports my previous questioning of Olweus (1993) regarding the incorporation of quantitative terminology to describe qualitative experiences.

Power

Some writers have given prominence to the idea that bullying should be indicative of an 'asymmetric power imbalance', with bullies being stronger, physically, psychologically or both, than their victims (Olweus, 1991; Munro, 1997) who, in turn, may have difficulty in defending themselves (Olweus, 1994). Thompson and Smith's 'uneven' research (1991, p.141) with children disclosed a belief held by some that any situation involving unprovoked aggression was bullying 'whether or not the odds are ...uneven.' Smith and Levan's research

with younger pupils (1995) discovered broad definitions of bullying that suggested that power imbalance may not always be present and that the vast majority of respondents, 87%, saw 'fighting with someone' as bullying indicating that inequality in power was not a necessary prerequisite. This adds to doubts also raised by Thompson and Arora (1991) that pupils' concepts of bullying could embrace relationships where the power was more balanced than usually assumed in discussions on bullying. Elsewhere Smith (1991) emphasised that greater power may be a matter of perception, a view echoed by Hazler et al. (1992, p.20) who felt that the perception of the bully as stronger 'means the victims don't *feel* they can retaliate' (*my emphasis*). Terry (1998) has proposed that physical size and strength might not solely determine whether there was an imbalance of power and that less apparent factors such as a family with a violent reputation may prove just as significant.

A key factor would appear to be the conscious choice to exploit any power differential that the perpetrator perceives. This notion has led some who seek to define to employ the term 'abuse'. For example, Smith and Sharp (1994, p.2) have suggested that 'bullying can be described as the systematic abuse of power.' La Fontaine (1991, p.12) observed powerless feelings in the victims who used a telephone reporting system, adding that she believed that it may also be part of the isolation felt by victims. Disempowerment or isolation may be related to a belief that they had no one to talk with about their feelings and had resorted to the telephone.

It seems possible that a cyclical element might be present for some in that bullying may be not only a consequence of a lack of power, but also a cause of the deficiency, therefore a feeling

of being disempowered may result from the bullying as well as contribute towards it. The ‘asymmetry’ may then become established *after* an initial exploratory act.

Unprovoked

Least identified of the chosen strands of writers and researchers (Appendix 2), ‘unprovoked’ has also prompted examination. Most of this has concerned the group of victims of bullying who provoke and gain gratification from the aggressive attention of others, the ‘provocative victims’ (Stephenson and Smith, 1987). These children, perceived to be small in number, deliberately provoke the antagonism of others (Besag, 1989, p.14). The existence of this subgroup raises questions about responsibility for actions and the allocation of blame, although Terry has argued that whether the victim was acting provocatively or not was of ‘dubious significance’ as a decision to respond rests with the bully, provoked or otherwise, and ‘that what would normally constitute provocation, and what might be perceived to be provocation by the bully, may be two distinct issues’ (Terry, 1998, p.257).

From the selection of strands in the deconstruction process to the discord, and discussion within each of those selected strands, the complexity of the task of finding consensus on definitions of bullying became apparent. The next task was to determine what others have found as they researched the ascription of meaning to the term ‘bullying’.

2:1(vi) Children's Concepts of Bullying

Even the definition of bullying can be said to have a phenomenological aspect: which behaviours do students perceive as constituting an episode of bullying?

(Hoover et al., 1992, p.7)

My reference age group, Years 5 and 6 (pupils aged between 9 and 11 years), could neither be categorised as 'old' nor 'young' and consequently examination of the literature incorporates material that has focused across phases including primary, middle and secondary aged pupils.

From data derived from secondary aged pupils in a single school Arora (1995, p.7) concluded that the pupils 'were able to generate a sophisticated model of bullying.' Her analysis of questionnaires showed that young people generated descriptions of a breadth of bullying actions. However, comparison with this research is difficult in that she did not make distinctions between 'definitions' and 'descriptions' or 'forms' that have been developed here. Within her list were what I have called strands ('frequency', 'older versus younger' which implies imbalance of power), forms ('direct physical aggression') and descriptions ('taunting', 'taking possessions'), offering further verification of the complexity of the task of defining bullying. Arora (1995, p.7) proposed that 'bullying, as perceived by those who are at the receiving end, is the name for aggressive actions of such a very wide variety that it cannot be defined in one or two paragraphs only', which endorsed my growing belief regarding the problematic nature of predetermined definitions of bullying in research with children.

Smith and Levan's (1995) study of younger children drew upon the extensive investigation through questionnaires of Whitney and Smith (1993, p.21) which found that 'the frequency of being bullied decreases with age.' Smith and Levan observed that from Year 3 to Year 4 admission to being bullied fell from 30-35% to 17% and they went on to advocate that by extrapolating the data backwards, even greater incidence levels of being bullied could be predicted. They accounted for this in two ways. First, they believed that younger pupils had yet to acquire the appropriate social and assertiveness skills to discourage bullying. Second, and of more significance here, that younger children may possess differing concepts of what constitutes bullying. They found that younger pupils appeared to employ a wide range of adjectives and examples in defining bullying and, therefore, have yet to acquire many boundaries in their comprehension of the term. Their sample of pupils seldom utilised ideas of repetition or provocation and made little reference to indirect forms of bullying used in definitions and descriptions. Smith and Levan (1995, p.498) concluded that younger child had a breadth definition and were prepared to embrace more indirect forms such as 'telling nasty stories.' The authors declared a belief in the centrality of definition to research in this area plus a need for more investigation. Perhaps surprisingly they did not relate that differences in incidence levels might have been accounted for by the possibility that older pupils could have been less willing to admit to bullying, discuss it openly or willing to admit involvement to a transient population of researchers.

In gathering their data Smith and Levan utilised a simple 'yes/no' response to ascertain whether a given statement represented bullying. Even with very young pupils such a format was problematic since it told pupils little about such factors as the context or the intent of

perpetrators. In short, it gave them a closed decision making process that provided little opportunity for pupils to reflect upon the complexities of what constitutes bullying. The ‘game’ that I developed, and incorporated in this thesis, aimed to generate insights into the intricacies of children’s concepts of bullying from their debates and discussions. Indeed, it was designed to instigate reflection, discussion and debate.

One further piece of research merits inclusion here. Christie et al. (1995, p.1) have argued that, as part of a whole school policy, there is a need to acquire ‘clear definition and shared understanding among the various parties involved, including children, parents and teachers, of what actually constitutes bullying as well as what action should be taken to deal with the problem.’ As with this study, their unpublished exploration of children’s pro-social and antisocial behaviours gathered data from both individuals and groups of pupils. They placed emphasis on the thinking behind decision-making as they examined pupils’ discussion of positive and negative behaviours. Like the ‘game’, the concern was as much about the process of decision making as any attempt to quantify outcomes.

2:1(vii) Adults' Concepts of Bullying

Teachers

Key players in the school system are teachers who are charged with dealing with the situation and 'must act ... firmly against bullying' (DfE Circular 8/94, 1994b, paragraph 56). What they perceive bullying to be and how their perceptions relate to the interpretations of others would appear to be crucial to how the issue is dealt within a school context.

How teachers ... define bullying is not a trivial issue. ... it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the teacher who does view a particular type of event as bullying may be more likely to intervene.

(Boulton, 1997, p.230)

Until the work of Siann et al. (1993) and Boulton (1997) there had been little research into teachers' perceptions of how bullying was conceptualised. Boulton (1997) analysed teachers' responses to a limited number of incidents in his study, which resembled methods employed here with children. Despite confessed methodological problems, teachers appeared more likely than pupils to consider items from the offered list of behaviours, perhaps indicating a broader concept of bullying. 'Threatening people verbally', 'hitting, pushing and kicking' and 'forcing people to do things they don't want to do' were all rated highly. 'Leaving people out' and 'laughing at someone's misfortune' achieved the lowest ratings. Those rated highly fit a fairly stereotypic notion of bullying, with physical and psychological power ranking above social exclusion but the discrepancy between what teachers believed bullying to be and the more inclusive notions prevalent in academic literature was also evident. Hazler et al. (2001,

p.142) used scenarios to establish which behaviours teachers and counsellors identified as bullying. Unlike Boulton, they found that physical forms of abuse were more likely to be recognized as bullying than verbal or social forms. Boulton was also to observe little differences between the primary and secondary school teachers' definitions of bullying; however, he offered no detail concerning the nature, size and ethos of the schools involved. It may be that individual school cultures determine perspectives and influence definitions.

Boulton and Hawker (1997, pp.54-55) also found that both teachers and pupils were less inclined to include non-physical components. When asked to differentiate between bullying and teasing such behaviours as 'name calling' were included in the latter. They mentioned the link between teacher attitude and behaviour, originally proposed by Chazan et al. (1987, pp.116-140), suggesting that a teacher who sees teasing and bullying as synonymous would be more likely to be rigorous in dealing with a reported or observed incident than one who did not.

In a germane piece of research, based on interviews of twenty teachers, Siann et al. (1993) utilised a preconceived model of bullying drawing upon the four facets of a definition advocated by Besag (1989).

- 1) It can be verbal, psychological as well as physical. All the sample believed 'that bullying could be physical or mental/emotional' (Siann et al., 1993, p.313).

- 2) It can be characterised by an imbalance of power, which eleven of the sample saw as significant.
- 3) It is repetitive, which only two teachers questioned.
- 4) It can assume a form of being ‘socially acceptable behaviour as in a highly competitive approach to academic, sporting or social success, which by intent makes others feel inferior or causes distress’ (Besag, 1989, p.4). Siann et al., 1993, p.314). found that their sample of teachers were disinclined to see bullying as ‘socially acceptable’.

They also found that most teachers believed that there to be no ambiguity in the application of the term ‘bullying’ and concluded by underlining the need for teachers to be self-critical.

We believe that it is important for teachers to take this phenomenon seriously and to emphasise how important it is for all members of the school community to look critically at their own role in social interactions.

(Siann et al., 1993, p.320)

Parents

There has been no shortage of materials published with parents in mind, although the majority of them are advisory rather than providing insights into parental experiences and understanding (Brown, 1997; Elliott, 1997d; Herbert, 1996). As with teachers there is a paucity of data presenting parental perspectives and, until a NCPTA (National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations) survey, little that considered their understanding of the term ‘bullying’ (Edwards, 1996, pp.7-9). Edward’s synthesis of over a thousand respondents describes the multiple forms that bullying can take under the headings ‘verbal’, ‘physical’ and

‘psychological’, a breadth of views mirroring the findings of Pervin (1995, p.16). She continued by cataloguing definitions offered by parents under the headings:

‘Unwanted intrusion’: where emphasis was placed upon the wishes of the victim, which has not been developed, to any great extent, in many definitions.

‘Attainment of power’: where bullying was seen as a manifestation or expression of the powerful over those with less power. Some parents felt that bullying could determine acquisition of that power. This revisits the idea mentioned previously that bullying could be a means by which imbalances of power are formulated as well as being a consequence of that asymmetry.

‘Premeditated’: more conventionally here highlighting the significance of intention and dismissing accidental hurt.

‘The victims’ and ‘the bullies’: in which the former were perceived as vulnerable and weak and the latter deemed as domineering (Edwards, 1996).

Much of the earlier research, with its emphasis on determining incidence levels based upon preordained adult notions of bullying, sought to impose or refine ideas and, consequently, excluded pupil perceptions. Adult understanding of children’s perceptions appears to be both central and lacking (Cullingford, 1993). The significance of definition is not just a theoretical matter but has operational implications.

Some teachers wonder why much time needs to be spent on arriving at an agreed definition of bullying ... one answer to this is that adults (let alone children) do not behave (let alone believe) as if they have agreed about the definition of bullying and its unacceptability.

(Docking, 1996, p.131)

The need for definition has been located in trying to distinguish bullying from other forms of aggression and the constructs have provided a vocabulary which, although designed to expedite greater clarity, have also generated degrees of confusion and inconsistency. An accurate definition may not exist and bullying might be little more than individual interpretation of events or relationships by participants. It may also be dependent on the 'unique culture' of the specific school rather than the 'generic culture' of primary schools (Prosser, 1999, p.8). Just as each macro culture may have a differing meaning for the term bullying so too might each micro culture.

What I wanted to explore were the perceptions of this particular group of teachers, parents and pupils at this particular time in the context of little development of practice and policy on the subject. Differing racial or social composition amongst the pupils, or a case study school in which considerable work on the subject of bullying had been undertaken with pupils, may have produced different data and, consequently, different conclusions.

2:2 EXPERIENCE

It is one thing to observe patterns of social behaviour. It is another to experience them.

(Cullingford and Brown, 1995, p.11)

All the literature on bullying in schools would seem to be relevant to the experience of pupils consequently I have been chosen to focus here more on the use of terms such as ‘victims’ and ‘bullies’ and their meaning and construction as related in the literature. A simplistic definition of a ‘victim’ might be one who is bullied and a ‘bully’ as the perpetrator of such acts, but the previously mentioned problems over definitions of bullying translate into problems in the application of such labels. Acceptance of a broad definition based solely on notions of intent and hurt might mean that a single aggressive act could lead to deployment of such pejorative labels. If there were to be more extensive use of the term ‘bullying’, embracing a variety of forms of negative action, then it follows that equally extensive use of the terms ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ could be a consequence, as could higher reported incidence levels.

2:2(i) Victims

A variety of theories abound in the literature as to why pupils become victimised. Cowie et al. (1992) considered three models. The first focussed on ‘within child’ factors such as a victim’s lack of appropriate social skills. In this context Whitney et al. (1992) broadened the criteria beyond social skills to embrace educational, physical or behavioural difference, eg poor physical co-ordination. Victims become generally unpopular and socially rejected in the classroom (Lowenstein, 1995). Sharp (1996b), whilst arguing that any pupil can be a victim

of bullying, modified her statement adding that it is more likely that those who are 'different', have special educational needs, poor social skills or arrived part way through an academic year are more vulnerable. For Pikas (1993, p.1) the child who was bullied was 'radiating a dissonance'. Similarly the significance of a pupil being 'different' being a determinant of being bullied has been mentioned in research into pupil perceptions. Cullingford and Brown (1995, p.14) found that 36% of pupils felt that pupils became victims because they were different and that difference could be something as minor as hair colour.

The second model draws upon theories of attachment developed from research with pre-school age children. Cowie et al. (1992, p.98) link children with 'ambivalent-avoidant' attachment relationships, ie they receive 'haphazard care and doubt their own effectiveness in influencing the care giver', to an increased likelihood of being bullied.

The third model is a more complex cyclical model linking such factors as familial circumstances, mother-child attachment, child rearing techniques, self-esteem and relationships with peers. These, when combined with poor social skills and social withdrawal, may be apparent to bullies whose actions have a further impact upon self-esteem and a cyclical situation develops (Cowie et al., 1992). A further intricacy exists within this model in which low self-esteem is either a cause or consequence of bullying. Slee and Rigby (1993a) believe that low self-esteem distances victims from their peer groups. Sharp (1995) concluded that pupils with low esteem reported increased incidence of being bullied than their peers with higher esteem and that there was 'no evidence that low self-esteem acts as a "signal" which

encourages other students to target an individual initially, ... it is the way the bullied student responds which reinforces the aggressive behaviour' (Sharp, 1995, p.10).

In a study of a single class of pupils Torrance (1997) analysed the informal culture of her pupils. She observed that one pupil was bullied because 'she was in some way different' (Torrance, 1997, p.159), leading to feelings of isolation and perhaps absenteeism. She noted that another class member was a 'scapegoat' or 'common enemy' and was bullied by most of the class. She also observed a hierarchical social structure within the class, with two boys appearing to have power over a group and that group dominating the class. The reasoning behind the bullying was as much to do with membership, being 'in the gang', as with a perceived need to intimidate others. The implication here was that pupils were looking to gain social power for themselves and, in doing so, exercised power over others. She talked of 'top dogs' and 'under dogs' and that being the latter had little appeal for pupils. Therefore, maintaining the structure served the interest of the majority, who feared becoming 'under dogs', such was the power of the two 'top dogs'. Torrance (1997, p.161) referred to the power within the social group, arguing that 'it became apparent that the role of the witness could influence the behaviour of the bully by either lending or withdrawing their power.'

Boulton (1995) noted that victims enjoyed a degree of safety on the playground from a network of friends, but their social network was smaller than pupils nominated by their peers as bullies. He also observed that victims tended to be engaged in significantly fewer rule based games, adding that social skills training for victims of bullying based on gaining entry in such ruled based games decreased the likelihood of their being alone and vulnerable to the

bullies (Boulton, 1995). He further proposed that, with the passage of time, victims aroused less sympathy from peers and resorted to combining to become a social group in themselves.

In an analysis of case studies of pupils from a middle school Cowie et al. (1992, pp.86-95) revealed that two pupils were nominated as victims by between 40% and 75% of the classes. One pupil, Farana, found getting into group activities to be very difficult, with consequent isolation on the playground leading to her being more vulnerable to bullying.

Rigby and Slee (1991b) distinguished a group who adopted a relatively pro-victim stance, noting that their sympathy was not linked with any negative experiences of their own or any fear of bullies. They found that this was increasingly the case amongst primary school pupils. Although unclear about the motivation for this stance they concluded that 'it may be that some children, like some adults, find comfort in the belief that the world is just' (Rigby and Slee, 1991b, p.626). In another piece of research, Ahmad and Smith (1994, p.78) noted that more than half a sample of almost 300 middle school pupils who completed questionnaires related that they tried to help the victim 'in some way'. Counterbalancing this compassion Hazler et al. (1992, p.21) observed amongst older students that some were prepared to put 'blame on the victim rather than the bully.'

Lennox (1991, p.158) spoke of a need to 'break a code of secrecy' that surrounds bullying, yet the above figures raise questions about the secretive nature of the behaviour within the experience of a class group. It may well be that it is only a secret to teachers within the school, forming part of what Blatchford (1996, p.63) has termed the 'child-governed culture of

the playground, alien to that of adults and mysterious to them', underlining Sharp's opinion (1996, p.162) that teachers remain unaware of the bullying 'because of the conspiracy of silence that bullying encourages'. Nonetheless, Borg and Falzon (1989, p.254) discovered that 'bullying' has been perceived by teachers as the second most highly rated undesirable behaviour after 'stealing.'

Torrance found that more pupils would tell and expect help from their parents rather than teachers (1997, p.160). I have noted a link between those pupils who reported being bullied more extensively and an unwillingness to report matters to teachers, deeming them unprepared to afford time and uninterested in their experiences (Lee, 1993).

2:2(ii) Bullies

Olweus (1978) developed a typology of bullies based largely on research with boys. He subdivided bullies into 3 groups: 'aggressive bullies', 'passive bullies' and 'bully/victims'. In terms of the former Ross (1996) distinguished between an aggressive bully and an aggressive child by highlighting that victims form a part of the process for the bullies and that there is almost a need to create a victim. She surmises that aggressive children tend to be more random and less specifically individually directed. This distinction suggests that bullies would appear to discern a possession of power over their victims or exploit a characteristic that is provocative.

Olweus has not been alone in suggesting that there is a 'bully/victim' group.

It is notable that a considerable number of children were found to be bullies and victims. It is sometimes assumed that children are either victims or bullies and the possibility is not considered that the same child may be both. It is tempting to speculate that the hostility directed by these children towards their victim is fuelled by their own experience of being victimised in a different context.

(Stephenson and Smith, 1987, p.236)

It appears unclear whether they are a discrete group, distinguishable by participation in both behaviours (Mynard and Joseph, 1997), or whether they offer an indication that there is a continuum of involvement, which I felt was the case in former research (Lee, 1993). Less than 1 in 4 (22%) from a sample of 890 pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 were to report neither as bullies nor victims and the more that pupils were bullied the more likely it was that they would also admit to having bullied. This raised questions about the triad of bully, victim and non-participant as self-contained groups and I concluded that:

It is important not to lose sight of the concept that this is a behaviour that most pupils participate in to some extent. It would be easy to see the groups ... as permanent and mutually exclusive.

(Lee, 1993, pp.85-6)

Ross (1996) indicated that the triadic notion of bully, victim and non-involved could be a simplification, questioning the value of such descriptors in advancing an understanding of bullying. Yet the literature reflects not only extensive use of the model, but also further categorisations of both bully and victim.

'Passive' bullies, (Besag, 1989) or 'anxious' bullies, as they have been categorised elsewhere (Stephenson and Smith, 1989), tend to adopt their role following initial action by aggressive bullies, as they seek power for themselves. They have been described, perhaps colloquially, as 'sad', having few endearing qualities, more home problems and a preparedness to accept blame without implicating the aggressive bully (Ross, 1996, p.46). Besag (1989) found this group to be less popular with peers than bullies and also physically strong. Others have created different sub-groups, eg 'chronic' bullies (Elliott, 1997, p.4) which have been further divided into 'spoilt brats' and those who have been abused or humiliated elsewhere.

Hazler et al. (1992, p.21) concluded that bullies sought compensation for their own inadequacies as they 'crave social influence' and were motivated to enhance their self-esteem. Cullingford and Brown (1995) noted a more complex picture, with the search for social status intermingled with bullies, themselves being insecure, plus an apparently high degree of pleasure being derived from acts of bullying.

There is less research into the perpetrators of bullying and certainly little on their self-perceptions. La Fontaine's analysis of confidential telephone calls led to an observation that two thirds of victims reported being bullied by more than one person. She suggested that the children who carried out these acts were not all 'bullies' and that it did not reflect a permanent feature of their characters. The data informed La Fontaine's (1991, p.19) view that a preponderance of group aggression meant that 'more attention should be paid to the dynamics of children's social life, the exercise of power and the pressures to conform, rather than to searching for a cause in the individual characteristics or either bullies or victims.'

2:2(iii) The 'Non-involved'

Bullying has a capacity to have an impact upon the lives of children who are not directly involved. There is a dearth of research into pupils who may not be directly involved in bullying, yet have a critical role to play in the informal culture of schools. Their views and insights would seem significant, especially if they are to be central to any intervention programme, since as Glover et al. (1998, p.18) purported, as a result of their case study of a pupil, Sarah, 'students were more successful at "making people face things because they understand and they are at that point themselves".'

Boulton and Underwood (1992), following research with lower middle school children, proposed that those closest to the bully might form cliques that insulate the group against unpopularity. They may not bully but they preserve the informal social structure of the class which, I believe, raises questions about what constitutes non-involvement. If 'involvement' applies to witnessing events then large numbers of pupils would appear to be implicated. Pepler et al. (1999, p.443) noted that 85% of observed bullying incidents had members of the peer group present and Cullingford and Brown (1995) found that 50% of their sample of 128 pupils admitted to having seen bullying and added that over a third of their sample noted the 'different' nature of specific pupils, usually related to a physical attribute. Such difference stepped beyond awareness from bullies alone.

Once a difference is found and a nickname applied, then it appears there is a covert message that *all the children know about (my emphasis)*, and a victim is identified. It is important to stress that it is not only the bullies who know about which children are 'different'. It is a collective awareness.

(Cullingford and Brown, 1995, p.12)

They concluded that ‘no amount of typology – labelling particular children as bullies or victims – will really help create the social understanding that underpins all behaviour ... For this reason the onlookers are as important as anyone else’ (Cullingford and Brown, 1995, p.15).

American research (Hazler et al., 1991) sought to rank order characteristics that students felt led to victimisation. Whilst specific factors such as ‘clothes’, ‘facial appearance’, and being ‘overweight’ were ranked highly, the more generic, almost indefinable, ‘didn’t fit in/ different’ was ranked equal first (Hazler et al., 1991, p.147) indicating that there was essentially something distinctive about those selected as victims. The other first ranking was ‘their religion’. Once institutionalised, in that any distinctive feature becomes the way that a particular pupil may be perceived by others, the accumulated awareness may also have an impact on the behaviour of the victim, reinforcing the likelihood of further bullying. One act of bullying, conducted speculatively, may develop to become part of the way the pupil interacts with others. The status of ‘victim’ becomes established, with an accompanying likelihood of increased victimisation, with many ‘rewarding outcomes and few negative outcomes for perpetrators (Perry et al., 1990, p.1321) and the potential for increased feelings of lower social and academic self worth amongst victims (Neary and Joseph, 1994).

If the exploratory aggressive act from a perpetrator seeks to establish a differential, ‘asymmetry of power’, from which a victim is created, then sustaining that differential could be linked to the reactions of others as much as the continued actions of the perpetrator. Within the confines of the primary school classroom there may be pupils who are knowledgeable of

bullying acts, even witnesses to them. Their role in reinforcing any change of power or status may be significant as they form key components of 'the audience' (Clarkson, 1996 pp.42-44), usually referred to as 'bystanders'.

A Bystander is considered to be a person who does not become actively involved in a situation where someone else requires help. In the literature, the concept of the bystander is consistently applied to describe the behaviour of people in emergencies.

(Clarkson, 1987, p.82)

Rigby (1996) emphasised that little is known about the long term effects of witnessing bullying adding that the emotional reactions of 'bystanders can range from amusement to sadness and guilt. Elliott (1997a, p.3) referred to 'bystander attitude' where an inability to take action, fearing reprisals from the bullies, disempowers those who witness events. If this is accurate then pupils, who are neither bullies nor victims, may be socially and emotionally involved, if not actively participating in the bullying process.

For all their potential significance little is written about the 'non-involved', and even the contemporary major work from Smith et al., (1999) with its 'cross-national perspective' makes little mention of them. Within that volume the Spanish study (Ortega and Mora-Mechan, 1999) reviewed the attitudes of those whom they classified as 'observers', who did little to intervene, yet felt that they should have taken action. However, we gain little insights into their feelings or their understanding. Brown (1995; 1997) has developed a model that distinguishes between the 'bystander' ... who 'spectates, does nothing and lets the bullying to continue' and the 'indifferent' ... 'who feels aloof and uninterested in the bully and victim' which he sees forming part of the 'vicious bullying circle dance' (1995, p.29). The non-

involved pupils represent an under-explored area of the research for their beliefs and ideas may be pertinent to the construction of relationships within a primary school classroom. Their views were sought in this research. Here the term 'non-involved' will include some of the other influences on the school culture such as parents and teachers.

In a critique of ways that bullying was researched and being countered, Lane (1992) expressed concern that there was too strong a focus on those more directly involved ie victims or bullies and not enough upon the school as a whole. He related that the two-step model in which 'the problem is defined as bullying ... the solution is x,y or z depending upon whom you talk to' (Lane, 1992, p.139) failed to acknowledge the complexity of the problem. One reason for analysis stepping beyond the bully and victim model is my belief that pupil behaviour does not exist in isolation and has the potential to be perceived differently. Human beings who share a common physical environment may interpret the meanings of events within that environment very differently for reasons influenced by social factors (Molnar and Lindquist, 1990). This is a key tenet of the Ecosystemic Approach in which problem behaviours are perceived as part of the wider social setting of the school in which they occur (Upton and Cooper, 1990).

The behavior of everyone in the classroom or school in which a problem occurs influences and is influenced by that problem behaviour. From this perspective a change in the perception or behavior of anyone associated with a problem has the potential to influence the problem behavior.

(Molnar and Lindquist, 1990, p.xiv-xv)

This approach has its roots in systems theory and family therapy and acknowledges the importance of context and the wider systems in which pupils exist (Ayers et al., 1995, pp.48-49). Upton and Copper (1990) have isolated four principal features of the Ecosystemic

Approach. First, problem behaviour does not originate from within individuals but from the interaction between individuals and others. Acceptance of a notion of interaction would indicate that bullies, their victims and the 'non-involved', including adults, have the potential to make a contribution to any action or relationship and it follows their behaviour would inform solutions. Second, interactional patterns may be conceptualised in simple or complex ways. In the case of 'complex' a specific incident or behaviour may be altered or modified by multiple factors, many of which have occurred outside the classroom or school. Such a view when applied to bullying in schools indicates that there would be factors that moved beyond the immediate school boundaries to homes and the streets on which the pupils journeyed. 'Simple' analysis might be construed as being determined by immediate circumstances, in this case the classrooms and playgrounds. Third, causes of a specific incidence should be seen in what Upton and Cooper (1990, p.10) term 'cyclical chain of actions and reactions between participants.' Application of this reasoning implies that antecedents to an interaction exist and that bullying might be perceived as a complex interaction, rather than a deed done by one pupil to another. It is therefore not a simple 'cause and effect' as 'each factor can be seen as either a cause or an effect, depending on how we choose to "punctuate" the chain of events' (Cooper and Upton, 1990, p.12). Finally, any intervention should respond to the influence on an interaction by all participating parties, which in the bullying context, might well step beyond the immediate personnel involved and consider roles played by other pupils, teachers and parents and the interaction between these groups. Pepler et al. (1999, p.441) conceive of bullying existing within a 'dynamic system' that is supported by 'frames', which is a term applied to establishment of 'a pattern of interaction'. They urge adults to intervene 'to shift alliances within the peer group and disrupt the bully-victim frame and the peer frame that

surrounds the bully-victim interaction' (p.448). This analysis would be based upon recognition of the complexity of the phenomenon, an acknowledgement of their power to influence change and that they are far from being 'non-involved'. These four factors are not examined in this thesis, but serve to illustrate the significance of the diversity of influences on bullying in schools and the over-simplification of the 'bully' and 'victim' model.

2:2(iv) Teachers

Given the potential impact of bullying on self-esteem, learning, classroom friendships, long term relationships, and even the desire to continue with life (Smith and Sharp, 1994; Randall, 1996), teachers' knowledge, attitude, and action would seem significant, if not paramount. They possess power to support pupils, punish them, organize the classroom and influence, even determine, the classroom climate.

Pervin and Turner (1994) explored the views of teachers on bullying and compared quantitative data from pupils and their teachers from a single comprehensive school. They concluded that teachers underestimated the extent of bullying and that about seven out of ten teachers stated that pupils had reported bullying to them (Pervin and Turner, 1994, p.18). Boulton's (1997) tentative conclusions included that teachers felt a responsibility to prevent bullying, yet possessed somewhat low levels of confidence in dealing with it. He observed that teachers with greatest length of service expressed the most negative attitudes towards victims and he saw this as 'disturbing' (Boulton, 1997, p.231).

Siann et al. (1993) found an awareness of gender differences in the experience of bullying amongst secondary school teachers. The majority did not perceive a particular typology for bullies, but did for victims.

Teachers appeared to believe that pupils who habitually play the role of victim share a common characteristic of perceived vulnerability lying largely in their deviation from some social norm, whether of appearance, ability or ethnicity.

(Siann et al., 1993, p.320)

Ross (1996) highlighted a disparity in beliefs about teachers' knowledge of those who are involved. She cites Olweus's expression of confidence in the accuracy of teacher nominations, not echoed by Smith and Sharp (1994, p.11) who maintain that 'most teachers are only aware of a fraction of the bullying which may be going on.' None of the authors distinguished whether their focus was either secondary or primary schools, but Ross noted that Olweus spoke of Scandinavian schools where, for the first 6 years of schooling, children usually have the same teacher. If familiarity with pupils' relationships informed teacher awareness there were implications for my research in that, since I was to focus on the senior classes, most staff at Nicholas Street School could well know about the experience of these pupils. They had known the children in earlier classes and had witnessed the development of social relationships as they had progressed through the school.

2:2(v) Parents

As mentioned before there has been little written about the views and experiences of parents in relation to bullying in schools and that which exists is usually advisory rather arising from research (Brown, 1997; Lawson, 1994; O'Donnell, 1995). Most of these books do not contain

accounts of parents' experiences or relate their advice to the context of the school. Among the exceptions was Pervin's (1995) research into parents' knowledge of and attitude towards bullying, based on a survey from a single case study secondary school. He noted that almost one in five parents who visited 'felt let down by the school' (Pervin, 1995, p.17). The disappointment was founded on not knowing who to contact or unsympathetic responses from teachers. 38% of parents of pupils who had been bullied were asked by their own children not to contact the school. They had acquiesced to the wishes of their children, trusting in their children's ability to cope, which Pervin questions, given that they had resorted to telling their parents. He concluded with an expression of the need for increased communication between parents and teachers, including the conveying of feelings of discontent amongst parents about the way that situations were handled and added that teachers appeared to condone bullying. His findings, based on research that did not solely focus on parents of pupils who had been bullied, provide rare insights into a significant group in the management of bullying. Randall (1996, p.73) speaks of a need for more data on parents, including those whom he describes as 'neutral' and who 'can provide excellent material from a dispassionate viewpoint.' I was keen to gather data from parents, whether their children were involved in bullying or not, and, although there were to be frustrations in terms of the numbers of respondents, their contribution to this thesis was significant as they were key players in any account of the experience and ways of countering of bullying in a primary school.

2:3 COUNTERING BULLYING

In recent years there has been a proliferation of ideas and approaches to counter bullying in schools. In seeking to set them in a context that provides a basis for this thesis I have developed two broad categories. First, there are those processes that seek to be more proactive, aim to raise awareness and seek to create a caring ethos in which to bully would be anathema. Second, there are post-event techniques that have been proposed as ways of dealing with bullying. In essence these are reactive and may demand that those charged with dealing with an incident have familiarised themselves with and employ a particular technique or strategy. Around the time of the data gathering many specific approaches to counter bullying were being promoted in the literature (Smith and Thompson, 1991; Tattum and Herbert, 1993) and official sources (DfE, 1994). According to Mr Benjamin, the Headteacher, Nicholas Street School had not considered the subject of bullying in depth, but he had been party to the development of policy documents designed by the headteachers for the 'Cluster' group of schools, ie all the local primary, secondary and special schools.

Before considering approaches further I should underline that the focus of the study is a case study of a single school. It does not aspire to be a broader examination of the community and the families within that community. I have argued above that solutions to bullying in schools may not rest solely within schools. Indeed long term answers may rest with the broader, societal, systemic approach that considers areas such as parenting skills and early years education (Ross, 1996). These more extensive areas Ross (1996) has described as 'primary prevention' techniques and those focused on the school alone she termed as 'secondary'. She

argues that ‘action has been demanded on the part of the schools, the implication being that schools *cause* bullying and, therefore, are responsible for eliminating it’ (her emphasis) (Ross, 1996, p.211). Both Ross (1996) and Randall (1996) believe that bullying in schools stems from the wider problems of society. Here I should add that whilst I support the proposition that many causes of bullying may be located in the broader community, I believe that schools possess a capacity to ignore, nurture or condone it. Schools are powerful forces in determining the experiences of their pupils, and their policy and practice in countering bullying is significant. What follows, then, is a consideration of a variety of ‘secondary’ ways of dealing with bullying. Although I do not intend to offer comprehensive detail on approaches, it constitutes a review and categorising of many approaches advocated in the literature.

2:3a The Proactive

These are approaches to countering bullying that aim to create the structures and climates in school that make bullying an anathema. They aim to set a tone and raise awareness and are consequently difficult to evaluate in terms of their efficacy.

2:3a(i) Climate, Ethos and Documented Policy

The prevailing climate and ethos in a school is significant in determining whether bullying is countered effectively. Lane (1989a, p.213) suggests that there are ‘high and low bullying schools,’ that policy decisions have an impact on levels of bullying and that schools have a

key role to play ‘in promoting or reducing bullying.’ Stainton-Rogers (1997, p.67) has drawn attention to the reliance of schools on status differentials and that ‘hierarchical divisions of power are evident’ within schools. They possess structures that are vulnerable to the misuse of that power and create climates in which it becomes difficult for victims to seek help, as it might be an admission of weakness. He advocates that one answer would be a school in which teachers do not ridicule or make negative comments about any pupils, especially the more vulnerable. In earlier discussion on ‘asymmetry of power’, the focus was on relationships between pupils but, in a broader context, such a concept applies to the use and abuse of power within an institution and the methods employed to involve staff and pupils in decision-making processes.

Whole school policy development has formed a cornerstone of many anti-bullying strategies (Arora and Thompson, 1987; Foster et al., 1990; McNamara, 1995). Jenner and Greetham (1995) contend that any such policies should exist within a framework of a broader behaviour policy or as part of the school community’s responsibilities to help form positive relationships. However, there have been increasing external pressures on schools to address bullying as a distinct issue through explicit policy statements. For example:

School Staff must act - and importantly be seen to act - firmly against bullying whenever and wherever it appears. School behaviour policies and the associated rules of conduct should, therefore, make specific reference to bullying. Governing bodies should regularly review their school’s policy on bullying.

(DfE Circular 8/94, 1994, para.56)

Despite the tone of the above statement, the circular had no more than the status of guidance or strong recommendation. Further pressures on schools have come through the Ofsted inspection guidance (Ofsted, 1994, p.20) and recent government documents that have isolated bullying as an issue that should be countered in that ‘all schools must have a clear discipline policy ... this policy must include strategies to prevent bullying’ (DfEE, 1998, p.14).

The process of creating policy, and the understanding of it by all key parties, would appear to be crucial in determining the efficacy of that policy. Glover et al. (1998, pp.57-58) differentiate between policy which is created ‘top down’ and that which is generated ‘bottom up’. The former being the creation of senior managers and the latter involving staff below senior management level which would reflect democratic attitudes towards sharing power, notions of ownership and ‘shared values’ (Glover et al. 1998, p.58).

2:3a(ii) Curriculum

Ideas that seek to counter bullying through the curriculum are divided in two. First, there are those that raise awareness and seek to explore the potential of the informal pastoral curriculum (Elliott, 1997c). Second, are those approaches that seek to integrate the topic of bullying and related issues into the formal subject based curriculum. Herbert (1989), in considering the value of children’s literature in helping pupils understand the perspective of victims, argued the need for an integrated formal and pastoral curriculum approach. Subsequently he went on to focus on the need to audit the ‘affective’ curriculum as distinct from the ‘cognitive’

curriculum, urging more pupil involvement in generating solutions to bullying (Herbert, 1993).

Schools have been less inclined to integrate anti-bullying strategies into the formal curriculum or perhaps have not been aware of their potential (Glover et al., 1998). One exploratory vehicle for the subject has been children's fictional literature, of which there has been a proliferation in recent years (Stones, 1998). 'Bibliotherapy' has been heralded as having the potential to equip pupils with strategies for contemplation and perhaps possible practice (Oliver et al., 1994b). In Britain two texts have received attention in academic literature. The first was Arvan Kumar's *The Heartstone Odyssey*, which explored the subject of racial bullying (Horton, 1991; Sharp and Smith, 1993) and the second was Casdagli and Gobey's (1990) drama script *Only Playing Miss*, which was preceded by a statement that 'its unashamed objective is to stop bullying' (p.13). Cowie and Sharp (1994) have highlighted the potential of role-play and drama based on that script and the value of Kumar's novel. Maines and Robinson (1991a) advocated poetry and other forms of expressive language as ways of exploring feelings. In addition they incorporate art and music as other forms of expression as part of a focused day of training for pupils dedicated to countering bullying, rather than perceiving it as a component of a planned formal curriculum of a school. Glover (1997) identified RE, History, Science, the Expressive Arts and Languages as subjects worth exploration in a curriculum based anti-bullying approach.

Aimed at the promotion of democratic values in the school, the more informal curriculum has also been mentioned as having a value in a countering bullying strategy. Emphasis here has

been placed on the establishment of a forum for decision-making within the classroom that permits pupils to make important decisions and to use power constructively. Included in these would be co-operative group work which seeks to enhance relationships and involve all pupils in working together as teams (Cowie, 1995). Kutnick (1995, p.55) reported on the successful development of a programme of 'co-operative group work', which included bullies and victims, although it had little 'control' over incidents outside the school. Quicke (1995, p.63) identified a need to develop teaching programmes that focus, with sensitivity and reflection, on the language of 'democratic discourse'.

2:3a(iii) Gathering Data

Part of the countering of a climate of secrecy that may accompany bullying has been the recommendation that schools, and classes within those schools, carry out pupil surveys to determine levels of bullying and the nature of the pupil experience so that they generate a 'clear understanding' of the problem (Arora, 1994, pp.11). Such surveys serve not only to provide information, but also offer a message that bullying has been considered in an open, organised and informed manner and that teachers were monitoring levels (Arora, 1994; Hazler, 1994; Randall, 1996). With his encouragement for students to undertake interviews of their peers Rigby (1996) linked pupil research into bullying with motivating pupils to take action. One of the benefits could be that pupils undertaking research has a real context, as it is about their school and the experiences of their peers and not someone else's synthesis or view on data across a variety of schools.

2:3a(iv) The Playground

Bullying and the playground have been closely associated and consequently anti-bullying strategies have included developing safe, well maintained playgrounds on which all pupils have the right to feel safe and enjoy their leisure time (Boulton, 1994; Higgins, 1994). Blatchford (1998) underlined the importance of playground design, the need for training supervisory staff and their role in nurturing positive inter-personal relationships in anti-bullying initiatives. He contends that many groups, including parents and pupils, should be involved in playground design, indicating a sharing of responsibility which was likely to be found in a culture that was not hierarchical and dependent on the headteacher, governors or staff.

Boulton (1995) viewed the playground as significant, noting differences in the interaction patterns and playground behaviour of boys identified as either bullies, victims or non-involved. He recognised that this could be a consequence of, or a cause of, their status and that playground behaviour may distinguish certain pupils as victims, which may have implications for teachers and other adults involved in the supervision of children. Research into the relationship between children's playground and classroom behaviour (Pellegrini and Davis, 1993) has linked them in terms of physical activity on the playground and attentiveness on return to the classroom.

2:3b The Reactive

The literature concerning anti-bullying strategies contains acknowledgement that, however much those who work within schools determine to create an environment in which to bully would be an anathema, bullying will still take place. Approaches to post-event management have been proposed and these can be broadly divided into two, based on whether adults or children play the key roles in dealing with the bullying. The term adult in this context means teachers, headteacher or teaching assistants who work in schools, but it does not include parents. Limited research has been undertaken about the nature of actions that parents might advocate or support, but that which exists indicates that parents tend to adopt more punitive approaches than teachers (Smith and Jenner, 1997). I noted that a further dimension to intervention was whether it was characterised by those in authority, or given authority, utilising it either to impose sanctions or solutions or, alternatively, to use more collaborative or counselling based techniques. I constructed a matrix to summarise the forms (Table 2) with acknowledgement that certain approaches could be placed in more than one cell.

Table 2: Forms of Reactive Anti-bullying Strategies	
<p>Adult Authority/ Sanctions Based:- in which adults in the school use their authority and status, either formally or informally, to impose potential solutions. They are often sanction based.</p>	<p>Adult Democratic/Counselling Based in which adults in the school look for a form of reconciliation or, at least, bringing an end to the bullying without using their authority to impose solutions. Here those adults support pupils in developing more positive actions or relationships.</p>
<p>Pupil Authority/ Sanctions Based:- in which adults in the school delegate part of their authority to the pupils. It is deployed, formally or informally, to impose potential solutions. They may often be sanction based.</p>	<p>Pupil Democratic/Counselling Based:- in which adults in the school pass responsibility to pupils to seek to gain a form of reconciliation or, at least, an ending to the bullying without using any sanctions or imposed solutions.</p>

In the case of pupils' possession of the authority to determine the outcome, the decision to pass that responsibility to them is made by adults who wish to instigate such systems or approaches. Therefore whether pupils play a leading role is dependent on adults initiating or licensing it. In addition, ultimate responsibility for resolving bullying in school rests with teachers and other adults, especially the headteacher and the governing body. Pupil involvement has been limited by the control that pupils have been permitted to assume or can legitimately assume. Nonetheless, if the premise that 'bullying can be viewed as a

phenomenon which is embedded in pupil culture' (Sharp and Smith, 1991, p.51) is accurate, then placing pupils at the centre of proposed solutions may have merits.

2:3b(i) Adult Authority/Sanctions Based

In employing their authority in coping with bullying adults may call upon their size, authority, age or status, focussing principally on the bully with a perceived need to employ corrective techniques and to punish. Inherent within this are dangers of stepping over any formal or informal barriers and the action becoming bullying itself, especially if, as discussed previously, it is accepted that hurt is defined by the recipient. Conversely, taking the perspective of the pupil, it may be that the authority of the teacher comes to represent a way of balancing the power differential mentioned earlier and intervention compensates for any lack of power possessed by victims.

Randall (1996) appeared to sanction little more than an abuse of the power vested in adults in suggesting that:

One of the most effective strategies against bullying is simply to take notice of it and show bullies how disgusting they are. Name-calling and teasing frequently respond to this because the bullies experience similar blows to their morale and self-esteem as do victims.

(Randall, 1996, p.161)

Deliberately seeking to damage self-esteem and using such terminology as 'blows' runs counter to many of the more empathetic techniques mentioned later. It may well be that

punitive treatments could have a negative effect, reinforcing a view that being in possession of power invites opportunities to bully (Herbert, 1995).

One form of intervention is 'conflict resolution', where teachers and other adults use their skills or position to settle disputes, including bullying, between pupils. This strategy could have been included in the more democratic centred section, but it has been included here based upon the research of Higgins and Priest (1990) who found that teachers were more familiar with and seemed to employ 'adjudication' and 'arbitration' rather than 'mediation', where the emphasis has usually been upon improving communication between the parties and not taking a specific position. Adjudication was often informed by the application of a rule and, in the case of both adjudication and arbitration, taking the position of one of the disputants was an outcome.

Elliott (1997a) advocated relating methods to her typology of bullies. Replicating the terms employed by Olweus, she has described one group as 'aggressive bullies', who appeared similar in characteristics to those labelled simply as 'bullies' by Besag (1989 p.15). Elliott (1997a) urged adults to take reported bullying seriously, to act in unison and to hold discussions with all involved, adding that improved supervision and training for both teachers and parents was also helpful. For those termed 'anxious bullies'(see section 2:2[ii]), who may be as much victims as perpetrators, she encouraged adults to seek external professional support. These anxious pupils have been described as having low esteem and seeking attention through their aggressive actions and, although considered a minority group (Stephenson and Smith, 1989), they represent a challenging group because their motivation to

bully has been described as 'pathological'. Hence adults may exercise authority in these cases by calling upon outside expertise. 'Passive bullies', those who form part of groups that bully, have been said to do so because of a need for self protection. Techniques employed with this group look to arouse guilt and make each member of the group assume responsibility for what has happened (Elliott, 1997a). In these respects it resembles the 'No-Blame Approach' (Appendices 3 and 4).

Punishment, but not 'aggressive punishment', was included in Elliott's strategies (1997a, p.87) with emphasis on a form of making amends and apologising publicly or privately. The 'public' element of Elliott's view runs counter to Greenbaum (1989) who includes suspension of the perpetrator(s) from school as one of a variety of potential solutions, but nonetheless emphasised the importance of dealing with bullies privately. Jones (1997) advocated a strident application of authoritarian strategies in recommending that teachers 'punish bullies. Show him what you are putting on file and make him pay for whatever time it cost you to sort out.' (p.17). He offered no explanation for the gender choice in the chosen quotation.

In contrast to much of the above the least interventionist method that teachers and other adults who work in schools have the potential to deploy is being a role model. By being directive and firm without being cruel or aggressive Sharp (1996b) believes that staff offer a model that their pupils can emulate. This argument can be extended formally by staff developing their own code of conduct on bullying before moving on to undertake similar work with their pupils.

2:3b(ii) Adult Democratic/Counselling Based

Quality Circles and Circle Time

Sharp (1996a, pp.18-19) argued the case for the use of 'Quality Circles' in countering bullying. Derived from practices in Japanese industry in the 1950s, it is based on a problem-solving approach to addressing issues based upon groups identifying, discussing and offering potential solutions to a predicament. Specific techniques that bring a formality and structure to discussion can be employed or a period of data collection may be required before the problem-solving phase commences (Ross, 1996; Cowie and Sharp, 1992).

Little is known about the origins of 'Circle Time', although there are historical examples from differing times and cultures. North American Indians sat in circles with a talking object such as a pipe and Anglo Saxon monks met in 'moot circles' to discuss and debate issues (Mosely, 1996; Tew, 1998). Key characteristics of both forms focus on the custom and practice of formalising equality of status and power within the circle with all opinions listened to and valued. Onus is placed on the development of collective responsibility and employment of the circle as an arena for problem solving.

Counselling: Shared Concern Method and No Blame Approach.

Teachers supporting victims of bullying by counselling informally probably represents how many might perceive their approach, but reference here is to more formal forms of counselling (Glover et al., 1998; King, 1999). The most rigorous collection of data about this form of support has been La Fontaine's (1991) analysis of 'Childline' telephone calls over a period of three months. Amongst the findings of all the data gathered anonymously were that children were more prepared to speak out against bullying, that reporting it, in itself, did not always resolve matters and that children wanted to be involved in dealing with bullying (Harrison, 1997).

Even within more informal forms of counselling the imbalance of authority and status between teachers and their pupils is 'indisputable' (Cowie and Pecherek, 1994, p.97) and specific interventions have been devised which seek to redress that situation. The two most distinctive counselling based approaches to post-event intervention have been Pikas's (1989b) 'Shared Concern Method' (Pikas, 1989b, Duncan, 1996) and the similar Maines and Robinson's (1992) 'No Blame Approach'. Both approaches demand that teachers spend time working with the victimised, the bullies and those who were nearby or were aware of events. Details of the similarities of, and differences between, the two techniques have been included, alongside an outline of the structure (Appendices 3 and 4). It is not intended to offer detailed descriptions of the approaches here except to highlight that both perceive perpetrators and those who are bystanders as a group that will be encouraged to share responsibility through a

series of meetings. The teacher orientates the group towards the future and to solving the problem of bullying without there being a need for punishment.

The 'No Blame Approach' has been embellished with advice that bullying should not be regarded as 'abnormal or evil' (Maines and Robinson, 1991b) as many pupils stand back or collude with bullying. The mobilisation of pupils who are aware of what is happening is central to both forms of post event management, although it raises the question of whether there are boundaries around awareness and who is alert to what is happening. Robinson, Maines and Pikas are not alone in regarding blame as counter productive.

We should ask ourselves whether we are going to spend precious time in tracing the origins of peer conflict and precisely and judiciously attributing blame or alternatively using the time to resolve the problem and bring about a lasting reconciliation between two or more students.

(Rigby, 1996, p.191)

Robinson and Maines (1997) also condemn labels such as 'bully' and 'victim' being used beyond the literature on the subject on the basis that deploying them in schools means that both terms can have a negative impact on pupils' self-esteem and potentially have a similarly negative impact on parents with whom schools may well need to work co-operatively. They reject advice that urges change in victims on the basis that it places a degree of responsibility for what has happened with them. They fear the impact on what may already be feelings of inadequacy in the victim and suggest that the need to change behaviour should rest with perpetrators and those who were nearby.

Of all the theoretical stances behind 'No-Blame' perhaps the most controversial has been the advocacy, exemplified in the title, that blame should be abandoned. Non-punitive behaviour management has been advocated elsewhere (Dreikurs, R., 1972; Nelson et al., 1993), but in the context of bullying it may be more contentious. Given the emotional pressures that discovery of bullying can bring, particularly for parents, the decision not to punish, but to work positively with bullies, may be highly challenging and certainly contradicts some advice highlighted above in the discussion on adult authority.

In a specific adaptation of the 'No Blame Approach', Young (1998) claimed that the success of intervention by a support group was based on the idea that their version was a form of 'Brief Therapy' (de Shazer, 1994). In this approach what has happened, 'the problem', was less significant than the result, 'the solution' and what was required was the 'reframing' of a bullying incident in order to focus on the future. Punishment about a previous action would be less relevant than determining whether a relationship has a positive future or whether differences can be resolved.

Pikas's 'Shared Concern Method' aims to bring all parties into a single problem-solving group. It possesses a rigidity that suggests reliance on the power of teachers or 'therapists' to work to a script and structure, therefore perhaps it rests less easily within the framework of counselling approaches than the British equivalent. It also has been the subject of controversy in that it has raised concern in Sweden because, in not usually informing or involving parents and carers, it may break Swedish education law (Olweus, 1999).

Both of the above techniques have been employed in schools and case studies of their application indicate merit in them, although the studies have been undertaken by advocates of the approach and a need for independent evaluations has been emphasised (Docking, 1996). Ross (1996) has also focused on a lack of empirical evaluation. However, difficulties in evaluating their success or otherwise may render any evidence of their worth problematic. The presence of a clear, consistent approach, rather than the nature of that approach, may influence improvements in incidence levels of bullying. In any case, incidence levels alone appear a dubious barometer of success or failure, for they say little about the qualitative experience of the pupils. I shall return to this point later.

Other criticisms of Pikas have centred on the claim that bullies have the potential for displaying guilt about their actions which was proved to be little more than a response to finding out that punishment would not be involved (Ross, 1996). Ross also refers to Olweus's criticisms of the Pikas method on the basis that it has been built more on manipulation and latent threats rather than genuine co-operation and that a more severe sanction might be considered to be more honest.

Certainly there remain unanswered questions about both interventions. For example, repair to relationships may be one facet of the matter, but the damage to property and repayment of extorted money are not addressed by such approaches. Nonetheless, the encouragement of disclosure, the countering of secrecy and the knowledge that positive action has been taken without an overtly punitive component being deployed may have much to commend it. It

certainly blends in with the idea that, in many cases, where pupils have identified bullying, difficulties can occur in identifying roles of key players.

Assertiveness training and victim support

This has been included here on the basis that the support comes from, or is initiated by, adults in the school. The aim is often to move the victims from being victims to becoming members of the non-bullied group through the development of skills for effectively coping with bullying. They require change from those pupils who are 'picked on' and it could be argued that they have the right to be the way they are and that the onus to change should be on perpetrators, although changing bullies may be more difficult than teaching victims strategies as some perpetrators have had their behaviour rendered legitimate by parents who bully and by teachers who have allowed the bullying to go on uninterrupted.

Arora (1989, 1991) reported on the effectiveness of training in assertiveness skills for victims of bullying and schools involved in the Sheffield Project, noting increased self-esteem and self confidence in participating pupils (DfE, 1994). These included how to be positive, yet avoid boasting; friendship maintenance; being aware of feelings and emotions of themselves and others; positive body language and relaxation training. What does not appear to have been discussed in the literature was the potential value of assertiveness training for *all pupils*, giving perpetrators alternative ways of acting, victims the capacity to withstand bullying and bystanders the opportunity to develop ways of intervening non-aggressively in support of victims.

2:3b(iii) Pupil Authority Based

Peer involvement in both prevention and response to bullying has been defined by Sharp (1996a, p.21) as 'essential'. As well as possibly witnessing bullying and knowing the participants, it is the non-involved pupils who are essential in creating the social context that negates or nurtures it. However well structured and established any delegation of power to pupils may be, ultimate responsibility for developing, permitting and supporting interventions and addressing the bullying issue itself rests with staff. Nonetheless, pupils may possess key skills that support their active involvement in interpersonal problem solving. Amongst these is a capacity to see alternative solutions, develop plans to reach goals, and think consequentially (Elliott and Faupel, 1997).

Regarding pupils being formally given increased authority in schools, long before the subject of school bullying became a more open one, there had been experimentation with pupils having the power to censure through 'courts'. Ross (1996) mentioned the work of Wills and the 'Barns experiment' in a residential setting and Smith and Sharp (1994) referred to teachers sharing power with pupils in a less legalistic form in Summerhill.

One of the earliest examples cited in the literature was Laslett's (1982) consideration of a 'court', administered by pupils on largely judicial lines, aimed at giving them power over their colleagues. He wrote specifically about his experiences in a day special school with pupils classified as 'maladjusted'. In his own appraisal of the courts Laslett (1982, p.11) celebrated their achievement in that 'it took the problem of bullying beyond the rather sterile

interchanges between staff and children'. He emphasised a need for commitment and that a sharing of power may lead to exposure of 'vulnerabilities' for staff. Although the special school context of the innovation was somewhat specific, the concept has been adopted and advocated by others. In one middle school not only was a court set up but also legalistic language used to structure procedures ie Bench, Defendant, Complainant. Initial punishments were reported by the authors, Brier and Ahmad (1991, p.32) as 'Draconian' but more moderation prevailed as the court became established. Benefits were claimed through a statistical comparison with year groups in which no courts operated, but again there was no recognition that improvement in incidence levels might have been related to action taken rather the nature of that action.

One of the strongest endorsements of the bullying courts has come from Elliott, whose enthusiasm has been qualified by recognition that they should form part of a whole school policy. Elliott (1997b, p.63) claimed that it has 'proven to be an effective way of getting students involved in solving their own problems in a positive and constructive manner.' The 'proven' claim has been questioned elsewhere (Smith and Sharp, 1994), but Elliott's arguments also seem vulnerable in that experience of the court for the bully may be neither 'constructive' nor 'positive', although it could be argued that was the purpose. Elsewhere Gillard (1994b, p.14) has contended that the aspirations of such a court are not negative, but that pupils who are involved aim to 'achieve ... a more harmonious school'. He also emphasises the implications of charging pupils to judge others who have been labelled 'bullies' for a 'crime' that raise complex issues in the selection of cases and, inevitably, definition (Gillard, 1996, pp.110-111). In addition to punishing potentially innocent pupils,

the complexities of deciding *what the 'crime' of bullying is* places levels of responsibility on the shoulders of a group of pupils who may not formulate notions in the same way as adults. This is an area explored in this research.

Other reservations about bully courts centred on teachers' apprehensions about their potential for unduly punitive 'sentences' and the opportunity that they represent to formalise the very behaviour that they were seeking to counter (DfE, 1994). The prevailing stance seems to have been according bullies 'a touch of their own medicine'. A major piece of research in Canada made mention of pupil courts in thirty London schools and included reference to punishments such as staying after school and being made to eat lunch in an isolated area (Ziegler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). In the case of the latter form of punishment it seems an anachronism to legitimise social isolation which replicates one of the behaviours that bullies themselves employ.

Further concerns have been cited by Smith and Sharp (1994) including that bullies might be elected to the court and the potential for public trial to render the bully an anti-hero. In summary, the paucity of research may have contributed to the lack of endorsement for this approach in the literature. Much of the caution in the literature has centred on the idea that rigid, punitive approaches offer little likelihood of changing pupil behaviour and the risk of rendering bullying more clandestine, if indeed, it ever has been.

2:3b(iv) Pupil Democratic/Counselling Based

The potential of peers to influence anti-bullying approaches by adopting a role similar to that of a counsellor has received attention in the literature. In many cases it provides further evidence of the blurring of my categories developed in this section, for, as mentioned previously, the power to instigate and manage the systems within which pupils have been afforded a degree of authority rests with adults (Higgins and Priest, 1990; Cowie and Sharp, 1992). The three forms of peer support that have been written about include ‘befriending’, ‘peer counselling/ support’ and ‘peer mediation’.

Befriending

Befriending encourages children to make deliberate attempts to become the friend of a classmate who is experiencing difficulties. It usually relates to school policy and practice that aims at involving pupils in helping to create a caring ethos, although it has not *only* been associated with the bullying issue (Cowie, 1995). O’Connell (1995) described one response to bullying in a secondary school where pupils from Year 11 functioned as mentors to Year 7 pupils with bullying being the central driving force behind the inception of the scheme. This was also the case with the other two main forms ‘pupil non power’ approaches, ‘counselling’ and ‘mediation’, where explicit links with the bullying phenomenon have been cited (Knights, 1998; Rigby, 1996).

Peer-counselling/support

A number of documented case studies have described how pupils have become involved in a role similar to that of a counsellor. Peer counselling is said by McNamara (1996) to aim at changing pupils' responses to bullying from condoning it to viewing it as unacceptable. This strategy is enhanced by giving the responsibility for behaviour and the development of solutions over to the pupils themselves. Specifically selected pupils work with perpetrators to develop acknowledgement that their actions were unacceptable and to make a commitment to change. McNamara argues that peer counselling has the effect of 'de-escalation' of the situation as it seeks to minimise the impact of pupils feeling unfairly treated which can be associated with adults who put pressure on pupils to change their behaviour. Additionally, she believes it facilitates the development of alternative attitudes and behaviours and a longer-term perspective in that pupils imagined themselves to be older pupils where the behaviour might not be appropriate.

Sharp et al. (1994) have claimed that bullying behaviours are nurtured by the secrecy that results from pupils' reluctance to inform teachers if they are being bullied. Having peers as a part of a support system, or as an initial source of information, may be a preferred course of action for those who are bullied. The same authors referred to a 'bully line' in one school where peers provided a service, which amounted to little more than listening to problems. Following a period of training by a member of staff, pupils were licensed to offer their support and the lack of staff involvement led to pupils assuming a role for management of the system. The principal benefits were deemed to be enhancement of self-esteem of the counsellors, often

former victims themselves, and the acquisition of important interpersonal skills (Sharp et al., 1994).

Other more specific counselling approaches have been adopted such as 'Re-evaluation Counselling' (Cartwright, 1996). This was a case study in which a school counsellor trained a group of students in this form of counselling, encouraging outward expression of inner feelings, such as hurt and anger. The trained group then offered a confidential counselling service that was open to bullies and victims.

All the strategies mentioned in this section could also rest within the 'adult democratic' category as they require adults to initiate, nurture skills and to review and maintain systems that provide support.

Peer Mediation

Giving pupils skills, responsibility and subsequently power to mediate in bully/victim problems has led to a number of initiatives (Rigby, 1996). As with most interventions little evaluative material exists to assess their impact. However, in passing power to pupils to deal with incidents of bullying, a tension begins to arise for teachers. Professional responsibility demands that teachers have a significant say in handling situations and knowing what is happening in the classroom and the school. Transmitting authority to pupils by giving them a mediation role can mean encouraging associated notions of confidentiality according to

Knights, (1998, p.34) which may run counter to the idea of teachers being ultimately responsible for pupils' well-being.

One specific form of mediation, 'peacemaking', involved pupils nominating their mediator. 'As a result of the programme, guilt and blame seem to vanish. The peacemaking programme is effective because it allows children to take responsibility for settling disputes' (Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991, p.10). As with other approaches any evaluation of this intervention is highly problematic. Such simplistic criteria as the number of reported incidents fail to acknowledge that creating telling cultures and countering secrecy in itself may cause the number of reported incidents to rise (Sellors, 1996), indeed increased reported levels may be a symptom of success rather than of failure.

What emerges from the literature is that, although authority residing with pupils has been a common aspect, each approach has distinctive features and therefore evaluating their success, or otherwise, should embrace broad criteria including attitudinal change. Eslea and Smith (1998), in their questionnaire based research into bullying in selected primary schools, found a significant increase in positive pupil attitudes to interventions in all four of schools which had specific anti-bullying programmes. This occurred irrespective of any changes in reported levels of bullying.

All the previously mentioned methods for dealing with bullying entail teachers deploying their authority and status, whether it be sharing it with or giving it to others or enforcing it. In addition, some of the ideas mentioned were written about after the data collection at Nicholas

Street School, but have their roots in ideas or practices that developed as bullying was emerging as an issue for schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s. No distinctive system or techniques were evident in my case study school, yet what I wanted to explore was whether any underlying principles behind any approaches were present in the ideas of adults and children. I noted from the literature that there were differences in approach based upon who was given authority to manage bullying. I was concerned to examine such ideas as whether pupils saw teachers as the sole possessors of authority and whether teachers sought to deal with bullying through involvement of pupils other than those who had been directly involved. Much of the literature had spoken of the need for clarity of policy and practice and how parents, pupils and teachers perceived these seemed crucial to their efficacy.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Naturalistic inquiry strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. Most qualitative research describes and analyses peoples' individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions.

(Schumacher and McMillan, 1993, p.372)

I started this chapter with a view to distinguishing between 'methods', the description of the data gathering techniques and, 'methodology', an interrogation of those methods. As I progressed boundaries became blurred as I found reflection on methods to be an integral part of describing them and consequently the discussion is divided into three sections that are not mutually exclusive. They are:

- 1) Description of, and critical reflection on, the methods employed in data gathering;
- 2) Issues arising from ethical matters;
- 3) Consideration of broader methodological issues concerning validity, reliability and the nature of case study.

3:1 SETTING UP THE RESEARCH

3:1(i) Selecting the School

The choice of case study school in an ethnographic project depends upon a number of factors, many to do with the nature of the school. Whilst acknowledging that case study is about the individual, maybe the unique, I wanted to choose a school that possessed nothing particularly

idiosyncratic or untypical, yet recognizing that a 'typical' school was not an option. In selecting the school it was important that it met, or almost met, the following criteria:

- 1) I had had no previous contact with the school and that I knew none of the staff professionally or socially, which may have presented ethical concerns (Pollard, 1985a).
- 2) The school had not undertaken extensive professional development on the subject of bullying nor, to my knowledge, was renowned for any specific approach to bullying.
- 3) I felt a receptiveness to the project, not just from the Headteacher, but also the staff.

The number of pupils on roll would be significant as it needed to be large enough to facilitate consideration of the subject from a year group perspective and avoid the potential complexity of the mixed year groups often found in smaller primary schools. It also would mean that I would have increased opportunities for diversity of views from a fairly large number of teaching staff and the likelihood of a positive response from parents.

3:1(ii) The School

Nicholas Street School was located close to the centre of a medium sized town in the West of England. The buildings were a mixture of Victorian stone and modern portable wooden classrooms. According to the Headteacher, Mr Benjamin, it took pupils from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, which was significant, as I was aware that social advantage or disadvantage was a subject on which there appeared to be contradictory evidence in terms of reported bullying. Stephenson and Smith (1989) found that bullying was more common in

socially deprived areas, whilst O'Moore and Hillery (1989) found schools with 'middle class' status had the more widespread problem. As already stated I did not seek a 'typical' nor neutral school, I was concerned that the case study school should not have a disproportionate number of pupils from a particular socio-economic group. Although not a factor in the choice, there were only four pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

Nicholas Street School met most of my criteria, including that of size in that it was a Group 3 school with 351 pupils on roll throughout the first year of the study (1994-95) and 354 in the second year (1995-96). The structure of the school was simple (Table 3). The Headteacher, Mr Benjamin, had only been in post for about a year, having been promoted from the Deputy Headship of the school and attempts to fill the vacancy provided by his promotion had not been initially successful. Eventually Mrs Little was appointed as Deputy, a post temporarily filled by Mrs Penfold, during part of 1994-95. There were minor changes during the two years that I gathered data. Mrs Adams left early in the academic year 1995-96 on maternity leave, permitting Mrs Little to teach Year 5 group and Ms Alexander moved to teach Year 4.

Before moving on to consider the structure of the school it is important to set the context of the school in terms of its consideration of bullying given the contemporary external pressure on schools to address the issue. Like all state schools, Nicholas Street had received copies of *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* (DfE, 1994), but the document had not surfaced beyond the Headteacher's office, nor had a book of advice on bullying produced by the Local Education Authority (not referenced as it would be an identifier). It became clear that this might not have been neglect or a devaluing of the issue of bullying.

Table 3: School Structure and Class Groups in each year

<i>1994-95</i>		
<i>School Section</i>	<i>Year Groups</i>	<i>Name and position</i>
N/A		Mr Benjamin (Headteacher)
Key Stage 2 Upper School	Year 6	Ms James, Ms Alexander
	Year 5	Mr Hogan, Mr Yates
Key Stage 2 Lower School	Year 4	Mrs Barnes, Mrs Adams
	Year 3	Mrs Penfold, Mrs Robins
	Year 2	Mrs Little: (Deputy Head) Mrs Monroe
Key Stage 1	Year 1	Mrs Richards, Mrs Fashin
	Reception	Mrs Saunders
<i>1995-6</i>		
		Mr Benjamin (Headteacher)
Key Stage 2 Upper School	Year 6	Ms James, Mr Yates
	Year 5 (excess from Year 4)	Mr Hogan, Mrs Little:(Deputy Head)
Key Stage 2 Lower School	Year 4	Mrs Barnes, Ms Alexander
	Year 3	Mrs Penfold, Mrs Robins
Key Stage 1	Year 2	Temporary teacher, Mrs Monroe
	Year 1	Mrs Richards, Mrs Fashin
	Reception	Mrs Saunders

Mr Benjamin: *We are not talking about 'bolt on' philosophies. I've not read the LEA book on bullying. We need to think about it ourselves and then we may look at it. Although it may be good we don't have ownership if we've bought it in. (Int 1)*

Like many schools at the time it had neither addressed the subject of bullying as a detached, separate issue nor as part of a wider consideration of policy on behaviour management.

My first approach to the school was by telephone call to the Headteacher and I set up an initial meeting with him. I was deliberately vague, offering no revelation of the focus of the thesis, simply seeking a meeting that was designed to be exploratory. He was both positive and welcoming and we speedily moved on from his acceptance of the project to a consideration of frequency of visits and any interruption that my presence might cause.

We agreed that the teaching staff as a whole had to be informed and invited to question me. Therefore, I was given an opportunity to explain my presence and to respond to questions at the next staff meeting, which took place on the ensuing Monday. I had offered to meet the Governing Body, but the Headteacher insisted that he would inform them and he made it clear that he perceived the staff to be the 'gatekeepers'. Given that this group would be the most affected by my presence and that their significance in supplying data was pivotal, I grasped the opportunity to meet with them.

3:1(iii) Meeting the Teaching Staff

Until this point I had felt that these tentative beginnings had passed without problem, yet sitting in a circle with the eyes of tired teachers bearing down on me, there was an anxiety within that I hoped would not be apparent. I faced the dilemma of instilling confidence through clarity of presentation, conviction about subject matter and sufficient information about potential areas of exploration, yet not revealing too much. All of which was set in a context that the ‘stage of entry’ in a research project such as this can result in feelings of being ‘awkward, useless, uncomfortable, in a way, and a nuisance in the research setting’ (Morse, 1998, p.72).

Following a short personal introduction to the staff and a brief explanation of the nature of the research, I proposed a frequency of visits to the school, recommending at least once a week, to commence as soon as possible. Questions from staff included how other parties might be informed. I replied that I would tell Mealtime Assistants that I wanted to spend lunchtimes on the playground in the initial period of the research. The Headteacher’s regular information letter would inform parents. The ‘Ethics Protocol’ (Appendix 5) was distributed to the group and a brief explanation of the main principles given. Staff were permitted to keep copies and invited to comment at any stage, although none were to do so. When asked when the research would begin, the Headteacher interjected wryly with ‘*about ten minutes ago.*’ The humour of this comment had an immediate, positive impact upon the tone of the meeting and it began to feel more like a form of public endorsement of the project. I thought, but did not announce,

that, as far as the school was concerned, it had really begun with my initial telephone call to Mr Benjamin.

Conversation progressed to a request for my personal definition of bullying, presenting an opportunity to explain that I was not able to respond as it could be an area of future exploration with them, therefore I did not want my viewpoint to ‘pollute’ the discussion. Here was a dilemma in that no matter how much I had intended to give little away, my reluctance to respond with a given definition, in itself, had set an agenda. My formative views were not for sharing with this key audience at this time although, eventually, ideas were permeate to teachers, especially during second interviews.

I continued by outlining the projected methods of data collection and my intended participants. I explained that when employed interviews would not be highly structured and I wanted to avoid being over prescriptive. I added that I should also be hoping to work alongside the children, but not in the role of teacher, and that staff might use me as an aide in ways of their choosing. This led to enquiries about my presence and how I might be explained to the children in order to ensure a degree of consistency. I suggested that I might be described as someone who would be in the school ‘for a long while’, and who might be writing a book about schools, trusting that this would satisfy any healthy curiosity. I added that I wanted to encourage everyone involved to call me by my first name.

One significant anxiety raised was the presence of a researcher potentially influencing the quantity of bullying. Responding to this was difficult, as such an effect would be impossible

to predict. However, I sought to assure by replying that I hoped that this would not be the case, given that few pupils would know of the exact focus initially, unless they recalled Mr Benjamin's bulletin informing parents. I emphasised that it was important that I was seen as someone who would talk with individuals and small groups and not someone who would raise the subject of bullying with whole classes or seek to agitate. I underlined that I was sensitive to that situation but would monitor my effect during meetings with Mr Benjamin and also welcome feedback from staff.

I explained that were I to observe any serious incidents that concerned me I would tell the staff, adding that, if possible, I was not to be revealed as the source of information. However, should there be no one to report to, I would act in accordance with the school policy and as outlined in my Ethics Protocol. Throughout this discussion I recognised a feeling that research, in itself, can be a powerful force for change (Walker, 1983) and what was being stated here was a recognition that staff were becoming involved, questioning, focusing and reflecting. Whatever this case study was to become it would not take place in a static context, but one in which, from this meeting onwards, there was a dynamic to the formulation of ideas and opinions.

There were no further comments and I was left with an impression that the conversation had generated interest. It endorsed the Headteacher's view that this was a staff '*who did not spend their breaktimes moaning about kids, but discussed education at all sorts of levels*' (Int 1). However positive I felt about their response, I was concerned to have their support, albeit tacitly at this stage, and therefore I arranged with the Headteacher that I would telephone him

during the following week and set a time for my first entry into the school. Should he have received any negative comments from staff, we would seek to overcome any fears or apprehensions. I sent a letter of thanks.

During my next meeting with the Headteacher, he relayed that the staff reaction had '*appeared fine*'. Some teachers had felt my information had been '*vague*', but he recognised that '*that was fine, because at this stage it could be no other*' (6/6/94).

The impression of this exploratory meeting was that of a confident group of teachers who were prepared to raise questions and willing to consider their views. I knew that I would be working more closely with those who taught senior classes and was concerned that other staff might feel excluded. As a group they appeared eager to participate and keen to engage in the challenges to their thinking that the research might bring. The resultant approval indicated that the project had begun smoothly and Mr. Benjamin agreed that I could begin the process of 'getting in', planned to last about six to eight weeks. It would consist of talking with pupils, sitting in on selected classes and being around on the playground. Immediate acceptance led to a format of establishing patterns of attendance and we agreed that I might attend the school for one day a week. I elected to inform the staff and the Headteacher of the dates at the beginning of each term and the latter added that it would be acceptable to come into the school on additional occasions by arrangement with class teachers.

In our first meeting Mr Benjamin had proffered his belief in research as a means of schools '*moving forward and learning about ourselves*' and, in terms of the 'getting in' with adults, the preliminary stages had been without problem, but as Woods states:

Negotiating access ... is not just about getting into an institution or group in the sense of crossing the threshold that marks it off from the outside world, but proceeding across several thresholds that mark the way to the heart of the culture.

(Woods, 1986, p.24)

If part of the 'heart' of this culture were the pupils whose perspectives I would be seeking, then access would be a more long term, complex process, for what I was asking was not just permission, but credibility and trust. This demanded that time should be spent amongst them and the blending into the scenery that ethnography can sometimes demand was clearly rendered difficult through the age gap between the pupils and myself.

The optimism generated by the staff meeting left me with a feeling of being able to control both the timing and structure of the data gathering. This was to be sustained to a high degree, although the intrusive nature of the case study was to lead to modifications of intentions. The three groups, 'staff', 'children' and 'parents' that provided the central areas of investigation of the research demanded differing data gathering techniques and approaches. Age and status differential, availability of time, the occasional tentative movement of agreed parameters by the Headteacher and a desire to maintain the goodwill of all participants, were among factors that determined whether a particular approach was appropriate, viable or desirable. Thus there were a variety of methods employed and techniques were determined or modified by context and circumstances.

Nonetheless, at the outset of the data collection, I had created research priorities and procedures and, in the initial meeting with Mr Benjamin, I outlined them without attaching rigid time-scales (Table 4). Despite the clear structure indicated, the boundaries between Stages 2, 3 and 4 were to be less defined. For example, interviews with staff were dependent on convenient times for them and not any putative structure that I possessed. One of the many frustrations of my previous research (Lee, 1993) was the lack of opportunity to be flexible in the data gathering. Despite intentions that this research would be different limitations on my freedom emerged, yet these were more than compensated for by flexibility around the structure.

Table 4: Outline intended programme of data collection	
Stage 1: 'Getting in' and getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet with Headteacher and gaining permission; • introduction to staff and, perhaps, governors; • pilot conversation with pupils - getting a 'feel' for the issues and the processes; • spending time in classrooms and on the playground - fitting into the school culture.
Stage 2: Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial loosely structured interviews with Year 6 pupils; • the Bullying Definition 'game' with Year 6; • 1st/ 2nd interviews teachers of Year 6 classes;
Stage 3: Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • somewhat more structured interviews with Year 5 pupils; • 1st interview with teachers of Year 5 classes; • the Bullying Definition 'game' with Year 5; • questionnaires with Year 5 pupils.
Stage 4: Broadening the data gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st and 2nd Interviews with remaining teachers; • 2nd interviews with Year 5 teachers; • parents' interviews and questionnaires.

3:1(iv) Data gathering

For this thesis I have taken triangulation to mean:

A process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon can be seen.

(Stake, 1998, p.97)

I have mentioned the limitations of my previous study (Lee, 1993) one of which was the lack of triangulation, in that it examined only the perceptions of pupils on bullying and involved only the use of questionnaires as a source of data. In this study I employed two of Denzin's (1978) four basic types of triangulation ie by 'data', 'investigator', 'theory' and 'methodological'. I used 'data', in that a variety of sources informed the study and 'methodological' by deploying multiple methods to study a single issue.

Three techniques of gathering data were employed:

- 1) interviews
- 2) questionnaires (Appendices 6 and 7)
- 3) the 'Definition Game' (Table 6)

I also made limited field notes in the early stages and throughout the playing of the Definition 'game'.

Table 5: Summary of data gathering

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Form of Data Collection</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
Pupils (Year 6 - 1994-5, Year 5 -1994-5)	Definition Game	104 <i>(groups of 3 or 5)</i>
(Year 6 - 1994-5, Year 5 - 1994-5)	Interview <i>(6 second interviews Year 6)</i>	104
(Year 6 - 1995-6, Year 5 - 1995-6)	Questionnaires	104
Teachers	Interview and Second Interview	14
Parents	Interview	15
	Questionnaire	15
Mealtime Assistants	Group Interview	10

Thus pupils from Year 5 who were interviewed in the first year and completed questionnaires in the second year were *the only year* to participate in all three forms of data collection.

3:2 METHODS

3:2(i) Interviews

Interviews were open-ended with, in the case of teaching staff, issues arising from initial interviews informing subsequent ones. Ways of phrasing questions were constantly in my thoughts, yet I was anxious to avoid over-scripting interviews. Before an interview I determined to maintain no more than a 'short list of issue-orientated questions' (Stake, 1995, p.65) (Appendices 6, 7 and 8), leaving the responses of interviewees to influence the subsequent structure and content of the research. I intended that all interviews would be taped on mini cassette and permission to tape was sought prior to commencement.

For all my attempts not to be too prescriptive around questioning I conformed to what Spradley (1979, pp.59-60) has defined as 'ethnographic explanations' and all her three broad groups of questions were to feature, viz.

- 'Descriptive' - *what is the rule about bullying in this school?*
- 'Structural' - *how do you define bullying?*
- 'Contrast' - *are there any differences between nasty teasing and bullying?*

In the case of teachers initial interviews usually lasted about an hour. Transcripts were provided for them to consider and subsequent second interviews were undertaken in which they could develop or modify any areas or I could ask further questions or seek clarification.

Second interviews with the teachers gave credence to my perception that, throughout the data gathering process, questions were not simply invitations to respond. Instead they possessed an 'after effect' which was to set respondents thoughts and ideas into motion which revisiting initial ideas helped to clarify. Here was the potential for change that Walker (1983, p.157) spoke of as being 'sometimes more powerful than the recommendation or the conclusion.' In this respect it was difficult not to see the process as interventionist and that, simply by my asking teachers to consider an issue, they were making judgements and formulating views that might have an impact upon practice.

Another characteristic of teacher interviews was that through the occasionally protracted initial interview an atmosphere evolved or an understanding developed that often permitted second meetings to become more conversational in form. It led to a questioning of me, with all the problems of my values and attitudes invading responses through a more informal avenue than simple question and answer format. Since interviews could never be said to be what Baker (1997, p.131) has called 'neutral' I permitted, sometimes encouraged, the exchanges that occasionally occurred.

Teaching staff had observed me alongside pupils, if not in their classrooms, certainly on the playground. Even before beginning the formal part of the interview I talked with them about numerous matters. Despite a prolonged period before commencing the formal research I did not share, nor seek to share, membership of any of the groups. Despite being invited I declined opportunities to visit the staffroom, permitting their privacy and propelling me to

gain access to the pupil playground culture and recognising that there was no real true 'shared membership'.

In situations ... where there is no shared membership and where the interviewer and respondent are clearly in an unequal relationship, the question of personal skills and, of course, ethics looms large.

(Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.86)

This was even more applicable in the case of pupils. In their case mention was made of the relevant sections of the 'Ethics Protocol' at the outset of interviews. Three pupils declined to be taped but they permitted me to write notes about their responses. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 were interviewed for about 30 minutes and from the data provided from Year 6 key characters were invited for re-interview. Follow-up interviews were not to be conducted with Year 5 as the larger groups meant that I was spending more time in these classes and I sensed potentially overstaying my welcome.

My choice of the older pupils, with their potentially more extensive experience on which to reflect, as well as the maturity and language with which to articulate that experience, had an impact upon the conduct of the interviews (Mahon et al., 1996). The nature of the interviews developed as the data gathering process moved from Year 6 to Year 5. In the case of the former I felt a need for a 'light touch' to the structure of the interviews. They became 'directed conversations' and, wherever possible, had a conversational, informal aspect (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996, p.89). By the time I began the task of working alongside Year 5 I had formulated more focused questions or ways of asking question but kept mainly to the original schedule of issues (Appendix 6). I continued to aspire to an idea of 'directed

conversations' but a more structured feel developed with these groups and movements towards what Anderson (1990, p.223) has called 'normative'. As an interviewer, my intention was that I would be what Kvale (1996, p.148) described as 'gentle', which he defined as 'easy going, tolerates pauses, indicates that it is acceptable to put forward unconventional and provocative opinions.'

With Year 6 I began by eliciting hopes, desires and concerns regarding transition to secondary school, which invariably lead us naturally towards the bullying issue. It has been isolated as one of the five main concerns of pupils before transition (Measor and Woods, 1984) and found to relate to the process of a new intake 'settling down' in the new school (Plant, 1997). With Year 5 I lacked a similar convenient introductory subject and was compelled to spend more time on general conversation that was not directly related to the subject of bullying. However, by undertaking the work in this order, I knew many of the pupils and they had become familiar with my role. There then was an 'openness of purpose' (Kvale, 1996, p.127) and I continued to talk on a variety of subjects before concentrating on my agenda.

No pupil interview took place without having built up some form of relationship, aimed at the development of trust and a feeling of safety (King, 1996) yet avoiding the dangers of being patronising (Seidman, 1991). I attempted to ensure that interviewees felt at ease in my company, that they knew something about the person interviewing them and that they felt informed about their participation in the research. It had the added benefit of giving pupils a degree control of the agenda and breaking down imbalances in power, which seemed relevant given the nature of the research (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998).

Because of my professional background in working with young people experiencing difficulties, who often required an almost counselling approach, I became conscious of the enhanced skills and awareness of sensitivities required in interviewing pupils. I concur with Anderson (1990) that effective interviewing skills have parallels with counselling skills, such as the need for active listening, empathy and paraphrasing. By being in their classroom and on their playground I had been building a form of 'rapport' (Miller and Glassner, 1997) that, whilst never transcending the age, role and gender barriers, permitted what felt to me like warmth and engagement. It allowed many interviews to assume a counselling feel (King, 1996) or, at least, rendered them relatively relaxed experiences, facilitating open and free exchanges whenever possible (Robson, 1993).

Given that many pupils were prepared to recall or elaborate upon the more hurtful and sensitive elements in their relationships at school, there was always a potential that they might become upset. On reflection only two pupils appeared to be experiencing slight apprehension and upset during interviews and as a result both interviews were terminated, only to be continued with their permission and after a substantial delay. Any alternative would have been unethical (King, 1996). I monitored their return to the classroom and verified that they were settled into the class routines.

My initial menu of areas to be investigated was deliberately kept brief to permit me to be responsive to ideas and information from both adults and children. In that sense they were occasionally what Holstein and Gubrium (1997, p.126) have described as 'active' and full of the 'contamination' that interviewees brought with them and which licensed interviewees to

influence my agenda without determining it. On numerous occasions I was content to allow a degree of 'rambling' before returning to my focus (May, 1997).

Throughout the whole process I was aware of the impact that my personality, as well as my presence, had upon the interviews. In any discourse, but especially on a subject that can generate emotive responses and has the capacity to encourage passionate value positions, the relationship between the teller and the listener of the story cannot be discounted. A different listener might well lead to a different story.

The issue of how interviewees respond to us based on who we are ... is a practical concern as well as an epistemological or theoretical one. The issue may be exacerbated, for example, when we study groups with whom we do not share membership.

(Miller and Glassner, 1997, p.101)

'Key informants', as described by Wellington (1996, p.25), were to appear at the early stage. Initially the Headteacher and Ms James served as a means of access into the adult culture. Lorraine, the child chosen for an in-depth case study, and her mother were crucial to all that was to follow. However it was Paul, a pupil from Year 5, not 'key' in terms of data nor involvement in bullying, whose confidence in conversations with me at the outset had cleared pathways for others to speak. Here to be an 'informant' was not to be a supplier of extensive data but someone who enabled the process of access, - a gatekeeper.

Wellington (1996) cautions over the bias of key informants, although being circumspect about *all* data was essential.

The usual safeguards apply to them, but it also helps to have various kinds of informants. The more they constitute a cross-section of the population in question, the easier we might feel about the danger of bias.

(Woods, 1986, p.85)

Another feature that I became more aware of, and one that I tried to avoid, was what Perakyla (1997) has termed 'fishing', especially during interviews with adults. Here what seemed to happen was that as I became more conversational and active, it appeared that I set up a dialogue in which, 'participants can directly "fish" for information from one another by telling what they themselves know' (Perakyla, 1997, p.208).

Throughout the interviews with pupils I was mindful that this could be little more than a best attempt and that there would be responses that were what I was meant to hear rather than their realities. Relating with teachers was easier in that I could always invoke my professional past, whilst with parents I could talk of my experience as one. I was keen that parents were not to see me as the 'expert' which was a role I felt that I had adopted in the eyes of certain teaching staff, Mr Benjamin in particular.

A further positive aspect, described by Miller and Glassner (1987, p.102) as the 'special circumstances' of the interview, was a coming together that led to the creation of ideas about an issue that might not have happened without the research. Many adults and children conveyed thoughtfulness and a sense in which they were seeking to explain their understanding of matters perhaps for the first time. Occasional deliberate inclusion of the 'ums' and recognition of pauses in the transcripts of interviews were testimony to this phenomenon.

There was a dynamic to the interview process, with participants' initial thoughts becoming entwined with my own musings and leading to areas that I wished to raise, or seek clarity on, coming to the fore. Once this was recorded on tape and subsequently a 'hard copy' made, I started to set up analytical frameworks. This method, when added to the further reflective process of writing, meant that the journey from raw initial interview to final analysis involved a multi-layering of perceptions.

As there was to be a considerable amount of data collected through interviews I employed a transcriber. She listened to playback of taped recordings of interviews and simultaneously typed them into a computer based data analysis package, Hyperqual, which I discuss later. The use of a transcriber had ethical implications and she agreed to sign a declaration regarding confidentiality and the holding of data on disk (Appendix 9). It also presented difficulties such as interpreting moods or emotions expressed in interviews, for example through body language or tone of voice. I had anticipated this and aimed to overcome it during interviews through recourse to phrases such as *'you seemed a little concerned when'*. In themselves these forms of interjection assumed my correct interpretation of the interviewee's intended meaning or disposition.

Another concern was that of proximity to the data. Described by Seidman (1991, p.88) as an 'ideal solution', the transcription of tapes had the disadvantage of potentially removing me from opportunities to be close to information as it was being processed. In order to counter this I asked that tapes be transcribed as soon as possible, facilitating speedy production of 'hard copy' that I read with urgency and made notes on.

Concerning the reliability of taped interviews, Perakyla (1997) has argued that the use of tapes and transcripts from them eliminates many of the problems associated with accuracy, and therefore reliability, of field notes. However, taping interviews was not to produce total reliability. All interviews were recorded successfully, in that the feared blank tape did not materialise, but, usually in the case of pupils, occasional words were lost to the transcriber which on most occasions I was able to retrieve through my familiarity with the situation. One interview with a set of parents was interrupted by an incident with one of their children which, not only took their attention away, but also, for a short period, inhibited the quality of the material produced. More problematic with the parents was the presence of both of them, occasionally resulting in loss of comments from one against a background of utterances from their partner, but this was more than compensated by the interactive process that often enhanced the ideas being generated and supported recall of events.

3:2(ii) The Bullying Definition ‘game’

Exploration of pupils’ definitions of bullying proved to be an intricate task and incorporated this less conventional method of data gathering. During the ‘getting in’ period and exploratory interviews it became apparent that it would be problematic to ask pupils for a definition of bullying that provided a sentence or two embracing their understanding. Gaining insights into what pupils thought bullying to be would require a variety of techniques. In my initial conversations with pupils, they responded to questions about definitions by listing actions that fitted their personal concept, occasionally based on their own observations or experiences. Therefore I sought an alternative way of engaging pupils about their

understanding of the term 'bullying' and two forms were employed. The first, more conventional method, was through questionnaire, which facilitated an opportunity for pupils to reflect individually, without pressures of time. The second method, the 'game', was a selection exercise, undertaken in groups of either three or five pupils, in which actions, typed onto small strips of card, were, after discussion in groups, categorised as:-

- Yes, it is definitely bullying.
- It could be bullying.
- No, it is not bullying.

These categories were presented to the group on three larger pieces of laminated card and pupils were encouraged to place their smaller cards on the appropriate decision card. The actions (Table 6, *see next chapter*) incorporated many potential forms of bullying and all the strands were represented. The cards were presented in random order to groups from participating classes and each card was numbered permitting easy of recording of choice. Information derived from the game led to a simple rank ordering (Table 7, *see next chapter*), but perhaps more significantly, notes written at the time provided insights into the reasoning behind choices.

The 'game' was based on an exercise suggested by Sharp and Smith (1994, p.30) in which pupils were requested to say whether a description of an incident was or was not bullying. My adaptation were to:

- a) Create my own incidents but keep a few modified versions from their list;
- b) Increase the number of incidents from the original 19 to 43. This resulted in a wider range of behaviours that might be described as bullying. I drew upon case studies, observation in the school, a range of writing on the subject, including newspaper articles, and variations on the experiences related by the children in interviews;
- c) Incorporate positive behaviours in an attempt to overcome a totally negative tone and adding a further dimension to the whole experience so that it would be 'fun not boring' (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, p.344).
- d) Add the 'it could be bullying' choice. The idea of replicating the original exercise's simple 'yes' or 'no' choice perturbed me as it presupposed that actions could be categorised in such an uncomplicated manner. In creating the third choice pupils were compelled to reflect upon, and perhaps debate, any potential doubt and discuss the reasoning behind that doubt. It was that reflection that I wished to generate and it was to prove to be the trigger for so much of the thought and deliberation that enriched group discussions.

Twenty-six groups, who shall be referred to later by their allocated letters, eg Group C, were told of the rules at the commencement of the 'game'. I emphasised that there were no 'right answers' and that it was not a test, but a chance to discuss, co-operate, and make decisions. Pupils were given a chance to withdraw if they did not wish to play. With the aid of class teachers, and my knowledge of the pupils, I made every attempt to avoid children who might be experiencing any form of negative relationship or interaction being in the same group. The children were also encouraged to decide how they would deal with any disagreement within

the group as to where a card should be placed and, where such decisions were not forthcoming, I suggested a simple majority decision. This process developed discussion groups who became akin to Blumer's 'panel of experts' (Quinn Patton, 1980, p.76), who permitted conversation to flow quite effortlessly (Mauthner, 1997).

A further benefit of the increased number of cards was the encouragement of the generation of differences in detail between events. For example:

Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls call him 'thicky' to his face.

Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls call him 'thicky' but behind his back.

Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two staff call him 'thicky' but behind his back.

The text describing each event was kept as brief as possible in order to encourage discussion about what further information might be required before the term 'bullying' could be ascribed to it. I considered adding more information, but decided that this would stifle discussion and make locating the cards an easier task than I wanted it to be. Certain events provoked more discussion than others did, with a few receiving little additional attention and speedily consigned to their chosen label. Throughout the game I adopted a non-interventionist approach which meant that if asked for more information I left the situation open for the children to interpret in their own way.

Attempts were made to include the key constructs such as 'intent' and 'hurt'. The phrase 'on purpose' helped to indicate intent, and, when not using the term 'hurt' itself, expressions such as 'feel bad' were employed. Phrases like 'every time' preceding descriptions added ideas such as repetition, even implying a temporal aspect. Asymmetric relationships or imbalances of power, cited in the literature (Olweus, 1993), were more difficult to embrace, but threats such as saying he or she would 'make' something happen seemed to convey such a notion. Physical aggression and fighting, in more obvious forms, were omitted from my selection but there were some physical elements in less obvious forms such as pulling a child's hair and the threat of violence.

3:2(iii) Questionnaires

A questionnaire for pupils was designed to gather information on their views of the bullying phenomenon in a broad sense, data about the issue in relation to their school and indications of their personal experience (Appendix 10). A total of 104 pupils were invited to complete a questionnaire anonymously and none declined. This followed a pilot with 17 Year 6 pupils in July 1995 that led to few changes in either format or questions. The respondents came from two classes with which I had already conducted interviews and two that had taken no previous part in the research. In the first year of the gathering of data I interviewed pupils from Year 5 and 6, permitting time for questionnaires to be developed and administered to both year groups. However, following concern from Mr Benjamin regarding how much Year 6 had already participated in the research through interviews, it was decided to postpone this element until the following academic year.

The questionnaire served principally to develop themes already pursued by interviews, reframe questions to seek differing perspectives from the respondents and collect additional data. In the case of pupils, there were differences between the way in which this questionnaire was devised and conducted and some other research into bullying using this means. First, pupils themselves had talked with me during the initial phase and were invited to raise issues that they felt should form part of the questionnaire. I was mindful that in asking pupils to propose questions, I functioned as a filter for their examples and that even this form of participatory research was not value neutral. Second, this questionnaire offered a form of triangulation of the views of pupils rather than functioning as the sole form of data collection. Third, it aimed at asking certain questions in a slightly different way, in order to generate reflection on the experience of bullying and teasing. Finally, and most significantly, it fulfilled my ambition to remain principally within the interpretative paradigm and to generate significant qualitative data, although it did produce limited statistical data.

In the case of parents, the questionnaire (Appendix 11) was designed to increase their participation level and, initially, to provide a trawl of those who wanted to be involved or had a story to tell, but were cautious about being interviewed. It was designed to replicate, as much as was possible, areas raised in pupil questionnaires.

3:2(iv) Field notes

I wrote extensive notes relating to early meetings and impressions of the school, but once a pattern of data gathering had been established they became occasional notes of reactions to

situations and general observations. They assumed greater significance when I observed the pupils undertaking the 'game', when the decisions, and more particularly the thinking behind them, were noted. They were recorded on A4 paper, dated and added to a file kept throughout the duration of the research. On many occasions when typing in or reading transcriptions of interviews, I made notes on 'hard copy' which served as tentative beginnings to the analysis and an 'aide-memoir' of thinking throughout the process.

3:2(v) Methods considered but not employed

I deliberated about the use of non-participant observation on the playground as a means of data acquisition. In my time watching pupils and supervisory adults during recreation periods, I noticed little that I was convinced constituted bullying, certainly in the more physical or social exclusion forms that it might take, although I believed bullying did take place during recreation times. However, I was beginning to formulate the idea that relationships that determined whether extensive bullying was likely to take place were often developed away from the playground.

Another significant basis for the rejection of observation was that interpretation of an event as bullying would have been problematic and I would have brought my understanding of what bullying and teasing were to the event that was observed. It would be my definition, formed with limited understanding of the relationship between the pupils, little knowledge of the precursors to the act or the context in which it took place. All these reasons led me to question Kvale's (1996, p.104) belief that observation 'will usually give more valid knowledge than

merely asking subjects about their behaviour', especially as I recognised definitional problems and the potential for multiple interpretations of events.

Mr. Yates and I discussed the idea of 'videoing' playtimes from the access point of his classroom but the same deficiencies mentioned above applied, perhaps even more so. As Maxwell (1992, p.287) suggests 'it is possible that no amount of videotape or other data could resolve disagreements about the applicability of the term ... to the action that took place.' Observational data, especially that offered through the medium of a video recorder, seemed to add little opportunity for depth of insight into such a complex phenomenon. I was also worried that, if discovered using a video recorder by a pupil, it might negate the trust that was central to my work with pupils and which I was at pains to enhance.

Sociograms were considered as another method of collecting data as they could have helped to identify friendship patterns and from them it might have been possible to determine who were the pupils likely to be involved in bullying. Again I discussed the potential of this method with a teacher, Ms James, who was conducting her own form of sociogram with her class. The results were predictable, narrow information and set in time and they produced no surprises to her or, indeed, myself, having spent time with the pupils. It also gave no indication of the reasoning behind choices merely offering nominations that were confined to the class group. Finally, it painted a picture of relationships on a day and it was evident that there was a fluidity that this method did not discern. Such a process may have indicated pupils who were often 'picked on', but it did not require sociograms to determine those.

3:2(vi) Analysing data and the value of software

Collection and analysis of data were not distinct and separate stages but a cyclical process. Although data gathering began on initial contact with the Headteacher, the more formal, rigorous analysis commenced with a case study of the experiences and understanding of one pupil and those who also had a view about her experiences. From this case study a number of issues and questions arose that informed subsequent gathering and analysis of the data from the four classes. This, in turn, informed the final phase of a more widespread gathering of material from parents, the remaining teachers and pupils through the 'game' and questionnaires. I attempted to summarise the phases in a form of 'design' model (Miles and Hubermann, 1994), but found that the need to be reactive and opportunist in the school context did not permit a rigid model.

The choice to use a software package, 'Hyperqual' as a 'data base manager' was not an obvious one. While I agree with Robson's (1993) assertion that such tools should be employed where a substantial amount of data was generated, I was concerned that it might distance me from that data. My fears were not realised indeed the opportunity to revisit data and to browse and investigate a variety of 'tags', often at speed, gave a flexibility that it would have been difficult to replicate working with hard copy only (Tesch, 1990). Initial analysis was 'open' (Glaser, 1978) in that the technology permitted opportunities to experiment, to generate tentative categories that would have been more laborious without access to the software tool. Even at the most experimental phase I was concerned to resist constructing an analysis based upon any anticipated outcomes and allow the data to determine frameworks.

Experimentation with 'Hyperqual' helped realise the potential of the software. After initial exploration of ideas, teacher, parent and pupil's interviews were transcribed to their respective 'stacks'. The conversational nature of the interviews and the need to pursue ideas as they were presented in analysis meant that entering data was not easy if responses were to be classified into topics. With the second phase of more structured interviews with Year 5, issues became more defined, facilitating increased ease of allocation to categories. To assist in the grouping of responses of both Year 6 classes the transcriber was given a list of broad areas. This was to prove far from perfect but did facilitate initial categorisation, yet never enough to negate the need to read the hard copy to check if significant information existed outside my given classifications.

The 'tagging' of key words, or even names of pupils, proved a powerful aid in the formative process. Tagging specific terms, such as 'name calling' or 'picked on', permitted a relatively effortless method of tracing references to specific children when analysing data from the pupils.

The number of questionnaires completed by parents did not demand support from software but, with 104 pupils completing questionnaires, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used. Many of the answers requested in the questionnaires were simple 'yes' or 'no', serving as introductions to further questions that investigated reasoning behind choice. Consequently the tables that have been included are mainly descriptive. However, using SPSS to seek a correlation between certain sets of answers, did inform the analysis.

In terms of the development of codes from the data, through technology or otherwise, a number of techniques have assisted in constructing categories and models have aided, even sustained, the process at times. Amongst the most influential was the ‘open coding’ concept espoused by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser (1978) and the subsequent more ‘selective coding’ (Glaser, 1978).

From the former the central questions were:

* **What were the data a study of?**

Which amounted to reminding myself of the original intentions of the study and group to which data belonged (Glaser, 1978), but without limiting the development of new ideas.

* **What group or category did this response fit into?**

Which ‘forces’ the development of codes that earn their way into the theory by being grounded in the data (Glaser, 1978).

* **What was happening in the data?**

Which aimed to explain processes and what accounted for categories, in short beginning to generate reasoning and theory.

Regarding ‘selective coding’ (Glaser, 1978), visiting and revisiting data generated key concepts and with each examination, the resultant categories became ‘sharpened’ or new ones generated. Throughout a reflective process was constantly taking place and resulted in ‘memos’ to myself (Glaser, 1978) which varied from simple self addressed sentences and paragraphs to writing a paper for a research conference (Lee, 1996). An advantage of self-

directed memos was the freedom that most of them afford from syntactical and semantic constraints, although this inhibited sharing and celebration when apparent breakthroughs were recorded.

3:3 ETHICAL ISSUES

The challenge for social research is to find ways of eliciting children's opinions and experiences, and to develop appropriate methods and corresponding strategies to deal with ethical dilemmas that may arise.

(Morrow and Richards, 1996, p.96)

Decisions about ethical issues anticipated during the data gathering have been encapsulated in the 'Ethics Protocol' (Appendix 5). In the developmental stages of the research I sought to achieve a definitive document that would enshrine the rights and ensure the safety of those involved, yet not inhibit the aspirations of the research. Because of the potential sensitivity of the topic there were times, fortunately few in number, when that balance was not easy and the twin goals of ensuring rights and maximising access to data were not compatible. I needed clarity about priorities when those situations developed and the research process may have been compromised in order to fulfil the aspirations of the Protocol in terms of protecting the rights of participants. I recognized that there might have to be compromise on a 'costs-benefits ratio' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.348), that is the balance between social benefits of the research and the costs to individuals concerned.

My initial beliefs were that a protocol was a prerequisite of entry into the school and an unchanging statement of my intentions. However, the interaction between the processes and

constant need to examine the ethics of procedures highlighted how such matters were not just about preservation of rights. In many respects the 'Protocol' assumed the life of a working document, to which I often made reference and it proved to be more than a means of facilitating access. My conviction that the protocol would generate discussion and debate proved wrong, for when staff were introduced to the document, it generated little interest, with the copy placed on the staff notice board remaining seemingly 'unthumbed'. For all three groups of respondents the fact that a 'protocol' had been devised served as a demonstration of a sensitivity about the process of data gathering, which seemed as significant as any specific statements or aspirations within it.

3:3(i) Informed Consent

A minor's participation in research becomes dependent upon what Grisso (1992, p.109) suggested was a 'combination of parental permission plus child assent'. In this case the school, whilst acting 'in loco parentis', gave consent for the research and therefore for the participation of pupils. However there remained unresolved matters. The parents were informed of the research through a letter from the Headteacher, which was in the form of a newsletter covering several matters and introduced me as 'a lecturer from the University of Plymouth who is researching into bullying and teasing.' Nonetheless, I felt that this was 'assent' rather than 'consent' (Tymchuk, 1992) and that had come through Mr Benjamin's enthusiasm for the project and not parents or their children directly. My concern was that the 'blanket' nature of parental permission was assumed, rather than being a more widely endorsed licence to continue. I felt a need for a more substantive way of informing parents,

perhaps through a letter taken home prior to my work in each class, yet I acknowledged Mr Benjamin's desire to assert what he believed was a right. Ensuring a smooth passage to the data collection phase demanded concession to his wishes and I became aware of the persuasive influences that can operate when participants are invited to partake in research (Mason, 1996). It meant that I would be at pains to seek individual permission from each child prior to interviews, although participants in the early ones were not to be fully 'informed' of the exact focus, unless they recalled the Headteacher's letter to the parents.

Another early tension was that the copious attempts to ensure that pupils felt relaxed and not threatened in my company might have run counter to feelings evoked by their consideration of the central topic of bullying. The compromise position was letting pupils know that I was writing a book about how pupils get on with each other. That 'debriefing' might offer compensation for any deception that had taken place was negated by the fact that the key concept of bullying was raised early in conversations, since to leave it until the conclusion was little more than what Macklin (1992, p.100) has defined as 'a retrospective righting of the wrong'. Total honesty at the outset of such an exploratory piece seemed an impossible aspiration, therefore a hidden element had to be acknowledged, compensated for by knowledge that it would not be long before pupils would be likely to inform each other of my focus. All that could be achieved was to supply what Sapsford and Abbott (1997, p.319) have described as 'adequate knowledge' of the project.

By the time that I had reached the administration of the questionnaires matters had become more transparent and participants knew about the subject focus, the nature of the research instrument and were offered the opportunity to decline participation.

Another sensitive matter was a pupil admitting to bullying, especially in the context of adult expectations of being informed of potential problems concerning children for whom they have a responsibility (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998). It also ran counter to my statements on confidentiality for I aimed to provide a non-judgmental feel to the interviews and being trusted not to reveal sources was important. Morrow and Richards (1996, p.93) highlight the paucity of matters related to ethical issues and research with children outside of the field of developmental psychology and advocate that children should be considered as requiring ‘special care’ in terms of their ‘age, social status and powerlessness.’ Additional consideration here was given to potential feelings of disempowerment from those who said that they felt bullied.

Given the limited information regarding the project, the ‘competence’ of children to make relevant decisions about involvement in the project presented another dilemma (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This was particularly the case in relation to those who were designated, or who designated themselves, as involved in bullying. The complication centred on the ability of pupils to make decisions relating to participation, given the limited initial information presented, since it was impossible to predict how discussion of sensitive and hurtful moments would prove emotionally demanding. Among criteria for competence cited by Alderson (1995, p.78) are ‘knowledge’ and ‘rationality and stability’. Regarding the former, if the

argument that knowledge is gained through experience and interactions is sustainable then these pupils were unquestionably knowledgeable about issues around bullying in their school. The latter proved more complex yet, as the research evolved, evidence of their ‘wisdom’ (Alderson, 1995, p.79) and their capacity to talk about sensitive issues rationally and a form of sophistication countered any initial apprehension about upsetting interludes during interviews. In general children expressed a desire and enthusiasm to be part of the project and it was a temptation to temper their keenness with an imposed reservation from myself.

3:3(ii) The Right to Withdraw

The right to withdraw was mentioned briefly to classes, the staff at my meeting with them and parents, during a brief summary of my intentions, at the outset of each interview. Given that the time lapse between meeting pupils in their classes and their direct involvement in the research could have been as much as two months, it was essential to remind children about rights in this area at the beginning of each interview. I emphasised that they did not have to take part or they could ‘pass’ on any specific questions.

In the case of the ‘game’ pupils were informed of the rules and expectations and then asked if they still wished to play. None declined. All pupils and parents completing questionnaires were appraised at the outset of the right to withdraw or discontinue from the task or specific questions as well as that of confidentiality (Anderson, 1990). In the case of parents this procedure was less appropriate given that they volunteered their services.

3:3(iii) Confidentiality

Explicit written statements about the anonymity of the school, the town, the names of the participants were relatively easy to create and pseudonyms ensured this (Appendices 12 and 13, Table 3). I gained the impression from a few teaching staff that I was overcompensating, even labouring, such matters. A more problematic component was ensuring confidentiality on a day to day basis in terms of sources of information (Anderson, 1990). Lorraine, the in-depth case study, tested the practicalities of confidentiality and provided an example of the potential debilitating effects that this may have on progress. She had been selected by her class teacher as an interesting pupil to begin with and, later, she was to be involved in one of the few examples of what might be termed 'bullying' that I was to witness during the data collection period. When it came to interviewing pupils, she also offered a lot of information both at a personal experience and at a reflective level. Throughout the interviews I was at pains not to disclose information or ask questions that were based on information gleaned from informal discussions with teachers and interviews with pupils. The problem became more acute when Lorraine's mother volunteered to be interviewed. During these interviews I was aware of a need not to reveal sources of information as Lorraine, her friends or her teacher, although to do so may have facilitated discussion.

Tension between confidentiality and a need to pass on information was a risk throughout and appeared to be an inevitable dilemma facing research into sensitive areas of children's relationships (Mahon et al., 1996). I mentioned to Mr Benjamin that, in the event of a disturbing incident being reported, details would be passed on to either the class teacher or to

himself. He stated that this corresponded with his thinking. I determined that if, during the progress of an interview, it became apparent that an adult should be informed I would raise my agreement with the Headteacher. Much of the information from pupils was reflective or had been reported to staff and consequently required no action. However, one incident was sensitive enough to call my agreement into action. This was the case of Hilary who had recently undergone orthodontic treatment. Having been fitted with a brace, she had become the subject of ridicule from her friends, which was proving hurtful to her. Following her interview as part of the formal aspect of the research, she asked me if I could listen to what she had to say regarding the event and she clearly wanted advice. What followed became a form of second interview that she seemed to feel positive about. It became clear to me that she needed to involve her class teacher and I advised her to do so. We then rehearsed what she would say to him. Here was a demonstration of the boundaries around research becoming blurred as participants recognise the opportunity to seek advice and support.

3:3(iv) Protection from Harm

There was no apparent direct harm that participants faced through their involvement. I was aware of the need to be sensitive about the construction of groups of pupils undertaking the 'game' and any risks that might ensue either during the game or afterwards. In terms of interviews it concerned me that participants, who might have been intensively victimised, would receive additional attention from the perpetrator. In each class I spoke with the teachers and it was agreed that one way to minimise the risk was to place those most vulnerable at the end of the interview schedule, avoiding the potential threat from their peers arising from

revelation of negative experiences. Conversely, it could have led to ample opportunities for perpetrators to threaten others prior to interviews. To help to counter this I developed an order for interviews, yet appeared to be operating a random selection, although I would never really know how these and other precautions were to work.

3:3(v) Honesty

Total honesty with all participants concerning the nature, purpose and intended outcome of the research was an aspiration at the conception of the project. As mentioned above, it was modified when I felt that it was important that pupils, who were to be interviewed in the early data gathering, did not have knowledge of the specific focus. ‘Adequate knowledge’ summarised the reality. I was also anxious not to reveal my professional background as a teacher feeling that this might influence their responses and cause pupils and parents to react to me as they might other teachers.

3:3(vi) Debriefing

Mr Benjamin and I discussed outcomes other than the thesis and agreed that a summary of initial findings would be presented to the staff on conclusion of the data collection, although the time scale meant that not all participating staff might still be employed there. It was agreed that these preliminary impressions and a version of the definition ‘game’ would form part of a staff professional development day immediately following the data collection phase.

3:4 CASE STUDY, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.

Hammersley (1996) recommended that research into the human sciences be viewed as ranged along a spectrum.

At one end is the idea that ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ refer to internally coherent and comprehensive research paradigms ... at the other end of the spectrum is the belief that quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary and should be used as and when appropriate, depending upon the focus, purposes and circumstances of the research.

(Hammersley, 1996, p.160)

He suggests (1996, p.160) that at one end of that spectrum they can be considered as being ‘competing paradigms’ which have two contrasting forms of data informing them. One form, qualitative, draws upon on what Bryman (1988, p.94) has defined as ‘rich, deep’ data and the other, quantitative, draws upon ‘hard, reliable’ data. It is a comparison which Miles and Hubermann have reduced to the phrase ‘words rather than numbers’ (1994, p.1), although this seems a simplification in that even basic questionnaires demand understanding of terminology employed by the researcher. According to Wellington (1996, p.12) ‘hard’ data informs positivist researchers with supporting evidence for their beliefs in ‘an external, objective reality which is rational and independent of the observer’, which is in ‘competition’ with interpretative researchers, who accept that observers make a difference and that ‘reality is a human construct.’

At the other end of Hammersley’s (1996, p.167) spectrum is ‘methodological eclecticism’, which has the advantage of the potential to cancel out the respective weaknesses in each

method. While I acknowledge the need, in case study, to draw upon the differing paradigms with a view to providing 'best fit' methodological approaches I believe that there are dangers in losing sight of theoretical perspectives that should underpin research. Nonetheless mixing forms of data had potentially threefold advantages. First, it permitted the use of one form of data gathering to inform and influence research strategies that employed other forms. In this case early interviews were to inform the development of the questionnaires and to help impose a degree of structure to later interviews. Second, it provided differing sorts of information that were complementary. Here qualitative methods inspired reflection from adults and permitted opportunities for my reaction to guide further questioning. Quantitative methods were employed to provide background data about perceptions of pupils in the school. Even the information analysed from questionnaires has been largely written explanations as my concern was the meaning people made of their experiences and their own personal values and biases. The 'game' produced both forms of data and could be described as a group questionnaire, interview or experiment. Third, mixing forms provided opportunities to triangulate where one group of data can be compared with another that is 'likely to involve different threats to validity' (Hammersley, 1996, p.167).

I also was compelled to consider that data were rendered less pure by the multiple processes required in taking the spoken word from raw interview to print. Ideas were stated by interviewees, recorded, listened to by the transcriber, transcribed, read, interpreted and analysed by myself, reflected upon and finally written about before being read by another party. While I aimed at retaining the intentions of the original statements, it is inevitable that these processes would have an impact on original intended meanings.

Interpretative validity is inherently a matter of inference from the words and accounts of participants in the situations studied. Accounts of participants' meanings are never a matter of direct access, but always constructed by the researcher(s) on the basis of participants' accounts and other evidence.

(Maxwell, 1992, p.290)

Specifically regarding interviews of teachers, I appreciated that gathering data over a long period was an evolutionary process and that answers were arrived at through questioning, listening and reflection. Their ideas were not contained within a factual repository only to be released when required. I was asking for what Bogdan and Bilken (1992, p.34), in their discussion of phenomenological approaches, have called 'their point of view' and contest that this 'presents a problem', as a point of view is 'not an expression subjects use themselves.' It is the intrusive nature of this form of research that requires participants to formulate ideas and opinions from which the researcher makes interpretations. I also recognised that the findings are set in, and cannot be divorced from, the context of the study (Bogdan and Bilken, 1992). It is a case study of the perspectives of certain groups, in a particular school, at a particular time. It was, then, a case study that followed the pattern described by Yin (1989) in that it involved investigation of a real life phenomenon, that of bullying, within a real life context, a primary school.

Case study permits the use of eclectic research methods on the basis that they fit the design of project. Golby (1994, p.15) argues that education is such a broad field, with considerably diverse activities contained within it, 'that educational research ... will profit from and utilise the diversity of methods available.' He links it with professional activity and 'the pursuit of professional excellence through academic means' (Golby, 1994, p.16), seeing it as analogous

with investigative journalism or detective work rather than medical enquiry. It involves numbers of lines of enquiry and a constant examination of one's own values and prejudices.

Case study suggests an academic approach to practical problems can be of real practical significance. The significance of case study is not, however, that of straightforward solving of problems. Some versions of action research might offer such a thing. But case study's promise is rather that practical problems can be investigated in ways which might allow us to reconceptualise the problem, understand more fully its wider significance and act more intelligently in resolving it.

(Golby, 1994, p.16)

In elaboration, when confronting issues of validity and reliability, he uses the language of moderation. To illustrate, Golby (1994, p.21) writes of the ways in which case studies 'can move towards objectivity' and the need for 'reasonable procedures that diminish, to the extent that it is possible, factors such as observer bias, atypical events being taken as typical, false inferences and shaky generalisations.' Multiple sources of evidence need to be employed to seek to enhance construct validity. In this case study I have gleaned differing opinions on events, relationships and ideas through a variety of data gathering methods.

In further examining matters of reliability I shall focus on the generalisability of case study. Generalising, in research terms, usually means the making of claims about findings to other settings. Despite the number of interviews of participants and the attempts to gather data by other means this is still a singular story. The descriptions of the shortcomings of case study as 'a poor basis for generalisation' abound in the literature (Stake, 1995, p.7). Even in the formative stages of the development of the thesis, I was in agreement with Walker's (1983, p.165) view that 'case studies tell a truth but not the truth ... they are always partial accounts;

constructions of reality; representations.’ I was also mindful that, in terms of participants’ individual contributions, it may not be ‘the truth’ but it was their truth (Graue and Walsh, 1998, p.20), or perhaps my version of it, and that what would emerge would not offer ‘explanation’ but ‘understanding’ (Kenny and Grotelueschen, 1984, p.41).

For all the reservations about generalisability mentioned there are also claims, such as that of Hammersley, that too many advocates of case study accept the criticism that it is ‘incapable of empirical generalisation’ (1996, p.170). He argues that many case studies draw conclusions, illustrating his contention with an example where Ball (1981) claimed that his case study school, Beachside Comprehensive, was representative of many other schools. There is then an appeal to typicality here. Certainly, as mentioned previously, in selecting Nicholas Street, I had a series of limited criteria that it fulfilled but I had never considered that it was typical. Conversely I had not sought to study in a school which appeared to be idiosyncratic or unrepresentative (Ernest, 1994).

Hammersley (1993, p.217) has also countered criticism that only those involved in a social situation can ‘truly understand it’ by supporting closeness to, and involvement in, a phenomenon yet criticising ‘the epistemological assumption that seems to underlie this argument - that knowledge comes from contact with reality’ as unsound. Proximity to bullying amongst pupils provides support for Hammersley’s view. The subject of, and certainly the experience of, bullying generates natural emotional responses from those close to it. Such responses can distance participants from seeing the perspective of other parties in the action or understanding the views of others. Occasionally parents’ references to the

experiences of their own children and the outrage exhibited by a few pupils illustrated this. I am not arguing that emotion denies truth, merely that complex issues require a capacity to take time and to create a distance that those at the epicentre of negative experiences may not possess.

It is in the findings of others and other forms of research that case study is provided with a context, a backcloth against which the researcher can make judgements. The literature on bullying invited comparison with what was being found in other schools and in other countries.

Whether the other cases be historical or ethnographic, such comparisons tend to open up new perspectives on one's own case, generating both a consciousness of one's knowingness and a sense of the accepted as problematic.

(Stenhouse, 1985, p.267)

The pupils provided opportunities for what Stake (1995, p.7) termed 'petite generalisations'. They have permitted me to draw conclusions about their common experience, which may inform or relate to experiences of other pupils in other schools (Bogdan and Bilken, 1992). They are 'assertions' (Erickson, 1986) which become attributed to a source. For example, in this study, I have generated numerous categories of responses which I discuss and to which I then attribute significance. Nonetheless, they remain my interpretations and my categories with the dangers of bias that inductive study possesses.

One of my concerns at the outset was that I had already undertaken research into bullying in a variety of schools. I was already familiar with a literature, with pupil perceptions and, as a

teacher had experienced dealing with bullying incidents. I had opinions, biases and prejudices that could have had an impact on reliability and which I have sought to transcend. Qualitative research demands that I recognise potential dangers and that I employ methods to overcome them. These included spending time on all aspects of the project, reflection on or revision of my views and constantly reminding myself of the need to confront my prejudices. Given the emotions that the subject of bullying can arouse I recognised that I could never be completely successful (Bogdan and Bilken, 1992).

Not unconnected with ideas of personal values and bias were questions about whether someone else would have arrived at the same findings and conclusions. Much depends upon factors such as background, experience and theoretical stance of the researcher. I knew that there was a uniqueness that I, as an individual, brought. As a former teacher, seeking the views of my former fellow professionals, I felt comfortable talking with them, knowing their vocabulary, having an understanding of their culture. Inevitably, as mentioned previously, such common ground did not exist with pupils although few researchers are able to bridge age gaps in the way that Pollard (1985b) appeared to do.

Shipman (1985, p.274) claims that there are three reasons for undertaking research, the policy orientated, the theory orientated and the autonomous and that, whilst these may not be explicit at the outset, most researchers have a mixture of the three. In terms of the autonomous, the most selfish of the motives, the purpose here was clear in that it was a project that might facilitate an award. However it also served to add a wider range of understanding on a subject that was of personal and professional interest and for which I maintained a fascination.

The concept of having an effect upon policy had two dimensions. First, that which relates to the location of the case study. Here there was the dynamic that research possesses, through raising awareness and generating reflection, to influence both policy and practice by engaging respondents in thoughts on an issue which hitherto they have not considered in depth. This was particularly the case with interviews with teachers, with their in-built compulsion to examine their stances on bullying that may have clarified their own views and possibly have had an effect upon any subsequent policy changes. A second impact leads into the area of the generalisability of case study and how far the findings of this research might relate to the work of others in primary schools or, indeed, any school. A positivist standpoint would question the possibility. In countering this Golby (1994) urges stepping beyond the findings to the processes by which those findings were achieved. The task is to observe the subject:

... closely and to render it in some way intelligible. Intelligibility is not principally a matter of looking but, inseparably from looking, a matter of inspecting the lens through which we look.

(Golby, 1994, p.13)

In terms of the 'theory-oriented' motive for the research, the ambition of this case study was not 'iconoclasm, breakthroughs, cracking the paradigm not confirmation' (Shipman, 1985, p.275). I never sought to demolish 'current thinking' (Shipman, 1985, p.275) but to fulfil the aspirations of ethnography and call 'the cultures it studies into question rather than building on their 'taken-for-grantedness' (Stenhouse, 1985, p.266-267).

Qualitative enquiry can draw upon a variety of theoretical traditions and orientations yet I have not sought to ally my work to any single tradition. Cresswell (1998, pp7-8) speaks of the

five traditions of qualitative inquiry as being biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Only 'biography' might be deemed as less applicable for this study. However, if Cresswell's (1998, p.30) premises that biography is characterised by 'the story of a single individual ... providing a central focus' and 'the author is present in the study, reflecting on his own experiences and acknowledging that the study is his interpretation ...' are accurate then, through the ensuing story of Lorraine, this thesis could be considered to have biographical elements.

However, I also believe that this study is located in that which Quinn Patton (1980, p.69) defines as phenomenology and distils into the question 'what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' Whilst acknowledging the phenomenologist's view that we only know that which we experience, this study does not exclude those for whom the bullying experience may be no more than observation or awareness of existence. But, as Quinn Patton (1980, p.70) has elaborated, it steps beyond experience and seeks to find interpretation, indeed it appears to have been difficult to separate the two and they have become intertwined and the search becomes for what he described as the 'essence'.

Interpretation and the search for common symbols and understanding to give meaning to people's interactions is the foundation of the symbolic interactionist approach.

Only through close contact and direct interaction with people in open-minded, naturalistic inquiry and inductive analysis could the symbolic interactionist come to understand the symbolic world of the people being studied.

(Quinn Patton, 1980, p.76)

Since the aspirations of the thesis include gaining a closer understanding of the meaning of interactions defined as bullying and relationships based on such interactions, there has been a sense in which it also located in this form of research. This has been developed in the description of the 'game' which resembled a form of group interview, a technique used by Blumer, who has been closely associated with symbolic interactionism (Quinn Patton, 1980). The teachers, parents and particularly the children were what Quinn Patton (1980, p.76) termed my 'panel of experts' whose meanings arose from social interactions that I aimed to examine with 'open-minded, naturalistic enquiry and inductive analysis.'

4:1 LORRAINE

Following the 'getting in' period came the tentative beginnings of gathering data that speedily led to an account of the experience of one pupil from which significant issues for further investigation were to arise. After discussion with staff, and from personal observations, several pupils seemed to offer opportunities to begin to explore the intricacies or otherwise of their understanding and experience of bullying. It was the confident, outgoing Lorraine Sparrow from class 6J who presented the initial opportunity for interviews that not only provided data but informed methodology. Lorraine's story is based upon two interviews, materials derived from interviews with her peers, teacher and parent and enhanced by informal observations and conversations.

One notable feature of Nicholas Street School had been the lack of obvious candidates from the pupil population who conformed to any stereotype or category of bully. There was no one who created mayhem in the corridors, playgrounds or classrooms. Despite this I found that in discussions pupils and most teachers were openly using the terms 'bullying' and 'bully' and, in the case of teachers, 'victim'. Lorraine was a pupil to whom both the terms 'bully' and 'victim' were applied and yet she portrayed few of the traits associated with stereotypes (Byrne, 1994). She was able, outgoing and articulate. Her preparedness to offer her views in an open manner determined my aspirations with regard to subsequent interviews with other

pupils. As mentioned previously I was hoping for more informal discussion style interviews (Woods, 1986) and Lorraine proved that this ambition was achievable.

Her class, 6J, was my first base in the formal data gathering phase and it was with typical inquisitiveness and urgency that Lorraine sought the reason for my presence in the class. Later this was to be matched by a desire, which resembled a demand, to be the first interviewee. Such forthrightness came as no surprise to her teacher, Ms James, as she related that Lorraine appeared to need to be the epicentre of class activity and was aware of all school developments. She certainly exhibited leadership qualities, not a feature noted in bullies according to Hoover and Hazler (1991), although her form of those qualities occasionally served as an irritation to her peers. Her class teacher was concerned about certain relationships in the class and thought that Lorraine was a central figure in the problems. When the story began to unfold Lorraine complained that she had been bullied, but not by her classmates, yet some pupils from within her class felt that she was the perpetrator of much of that which they termed bullying.

4:1(i) Her story as a victim

Initially Lorraine talked about her relationship with Amanda, who was currently in the parallel class, 6A. She explained that, when they were in the same classes during the previous two school years, Amanda had called her names and was always *'teasing her'* with sufficient gravity for Lorraine to consider it to be bullying.

Lor: *She's got a load of friends, you see and they're not nasty to me but they just ignore me and she's the one who sort of like tells them what to do. "If you don't do this you won't be my friend."*

CL: *What sort of things did she do to you that you would call bullying?*

Lor: *She used to call me names. She made faces and stuff. She didn't hurt me, touch me, or anything, she was just always teasing me.*

CL: *What did it do to you?*

Lor: *I cried a lot and I told my Mum. My Mum and Dad went in and sorted it out but she just kept starting up again. (Int 1)*

In her reference to '*always teasing me*', she was more than indicating that the actions were repeated, she signalled that the relationship between the two girls was defined by negative actions. Despite visits from both sets of parents to enlist the support of the then class teacher, Mr Yates, Mr Benjamin, and phone calls from Lorraine's parents to Amanda's, the pernicious nature of the relationship continued. Lorraine talked in terms of being both vulnerable and sensitive and that Amanda exploited her sensibilities.

CL: *Why do you think that you have been picked on?*

Lor: *She knows that she can get to me. I'm sensitive and if she picks on me I will go to the teacher and cry and stuff. She finds it easy just to take the mick and my Mum says it is because she is jealous. I was hurt before and he's a 7th year now, Gordon. He hurt me in the street and we had to go to the police about it.*

CL: *Did he pick on other people?*

Lor: *He was naughty at school and he had a few fights with boys like Wasim and he got hurt and in trouble. (Int 1)*

Gordon, possessor of an extensive reputation as a bully, had moved to secondary education, leaving behind a trail of accounts from pupils who cited him as a major perpetrator. Whilst he

came to represent the nearest to the classic bully stereotype found in the memories of the pupils, his actions were not typical of what the majority of pupils were to describe as bullying. The relationship between Lorraine and Amanda was more typical and exemplified by Lorraine's reference to Amanda's power over her, knowing that she could generate a reaction without committing a malicious act.

Later Lorraine revealed that relationships with another pupil, Julie, again from the parallel class 6, was causing her concern:

Lor: *Well, this person gives me these dirty looks and when I come to the school I know she is going to say something to somebody about me, sort of like 'oh no there's Lorraine' or something horrible. (Int 2)*

As we discussed her view of the attention that she had received from Julie, the conversation turned to matters of definition.

4:1(ii) Her definition

Throughout our previous conversations Lorraine had used the terms 'bullying' and 'teasing' interchangeably. Opportunities to elicit her understanding presented themselves in both interviews.

Lor: *Teasing is when you are making a joke out of it and you don't mean to hurt people sort of thing. I mean with bullying it may not be making a joke and you may not be trying to hurt somebody but you can hurt somebody badly with bullying. Sometimes you do it on purpose but sometimes you don't really know that you are bullying. (Int 1)*

The conversation led naturally on to how other pupils might describe their treatment by Lorraine, which, in this context, she knew meant ‘bullying’.

Lor: *Well, I said if I was bullying someone I don't know about it and if they told me I would be sort of surprised.*

CL: *Would you be upset?*

Lor: *If I was teasing them and they said I was bullying them I would be surprised because that is not fair on me if I was only teasing them and they start making accusations. But if they were saying that I was bullying them, then give an example of what I was saying, I would understand and I would really say I was sorry and that I didn't mean it and hope we can still be friends and stuff. (Int 1)*

As well as underlining hurt and intent, through her use of ‘*mean it*’, in her understanding of bullying, she hinted that seeing herself as the aggressor was more difficult than perceiving herself as the victim. Later she reflected upon her experience and discerned a gender distinction about the forms that bullying could take which has been noted elsewhere (DfE, 1994).

Lor: *Take it from me girls are more, um they show their feelings more, like they get upset about it. They cry. They do say horrible things, but we don't swear - most of the time we don't swear and we don't hit and punch and fight and stuff - not like the boys. The boys can get quite aggressive sometimes. (Int 1)*

Lorraine was beginning, in her thoughtful, sometimes circuitous manner, to arrive at a form of definition. A further opportunity for elaboration presented itself, inviting a direct request for her stance.

Lor: *Bullying is sometimes when you are making out to hurt somebody on purpose, and sometimes you don't know that you are bullying but most of the time you do, I think. It's when you are teasing but on purpose to be nasty, not making it as fun but nastily teasing and hurting someone's feelings and sometimes knowing that you are hurting someone's feelings. Even when you do tell them they won't stop. (Int 2)*

Here she had re-iterated the importance of intent through 'on purpose' and also suggested that a conscious desire to hurt might not always be present. In addition, the resultant interpretation was similar to her previous distinction between bullying and teasing with the exception that 'nasty' refined her conceptualising of teasing. This slightly more sophisticated version used the same adjective as that employed in a definition designed for data gathering amongst pupils (Whitney et al, 1992). The 'nasty' appeared to constitute an acknowledgement of potential hurt that might be present in teasing that could be construed as being light hearted by the perpetrator.

For Lorraine teasing was not meant as an infliction of pain or hurt. This view was confirmed by her declaration of surprise that someone might think of her as a bully and her comment that reluctance on the part of the victim to make any hurt known to the perpetrator might be unfair. In conveying that victims had a responsibility to relate that they were being hurt, she seemed to be suggesting that it was a matter of interpretation on behalf of the recipient and contradicting her emphasis on the significance of intent mentioned previously. I was to find that she exuded such dominance in her relationships with her peers that it was difficult to imagine them confronting her with declarations of their feelings or interpretations. In order to cope with Lorraine her peers appeared to need a form of assertiveness that Lorraine herself possessed in abundance and which has been identified as absent in profiles of those who are

recipients of bullying (Johnstone, Munn and Edwards, 1992). I rarely noted such strength of character in other self-reported victims of bullying that I was to meet.

In her initial interview she had used familiar terminology, '*hurt*' and '*on purpose*'. However, her addition that it was possible to bully without realising that the action was causing physical or emotional pain may have indicated that Lorraine was either:

- a) not wishing to consider her own actions as bullying or;
- b) not wanting me to perceive her as a bully or;
- c) she was stating that what was of more consequence was the outcome;
- d) a combination of the above.

If Lorraine had not wanted me to see her in anything other than a positive light, it confirmed my view that confessing to causing hurt was more difficult than admitting to being hurt. This may be a contributory factor to higher rates of confession to being bullied, as opposed to being a bully, that I noted elsewhere (Lee, 1993).

I was to experience many contradictions and inconsistencies as both adults and children wrestled with their understanding of the term 'bullying'. Participants were using my enquiries to begin to develop a personal definition. What Lorraine called bullying consisted of much that amounted to a description of what she had experienced and appeared to take less account for her own actions on others ie what previously I have called a *description* and not a *definition*.

4:1(iii)**Dealing with the experience**

Lor: *When I was in the 5th Year I didn't like to tell the teacher often cos then you get teased because you are a 'dobber'. When I was being teased by, being bullied by Amanda, I told my Mum a couple of times and she went in and said to Mr Yates, who was the teacher at the time, and said about it, because I sometimes - I don't have the guts to go and tell them because they might just say "oh just ignore them and don't fuss and don't be stupid," but it's not being stupid, it's not fussing. So I tell my Mum and Dad sometimes and they go and talk and then, finally, Mr Yates tells me, whenever they hurt or bully, you must tell me.*

CL: *Ms James does it differently?*

Lor: *Yes she does it fairly. She is fair.*

CL: *Tell me what you mean by that?*

Lor: *Well what I mean by she is fair is that if she hears you say one word mean to somebody, you are in the dog house and you can get in trouble that makes you have second thoughts - not just because Ms James will tell you off but you can see that you do hurt somebody's feelings and she makes you see that.*

CL: *Is there is a school rule about it?*

Lor: *Yeah, I don't know actually - no bullying.*

CL: *How do you know?*

Lor: *Cos Mr Benjamin, whenever, I think, whenever there's a couple of people who get hurt one day, because once you're told off by a teacher that's it you shouldn't do it, and sometimes you get told off pretty badly and Mr Benjamin sort of, in assembly, mentions it and tells us that it's not fair, we shouldn't do it, and he says 'it's a school rule that if you do that' and Mr Hogan is very strict. He says you will be put in the book if they make one sly remark, if they do anything horrible to you, they will be put in the book you should tell us. (Int 2)*

The 'book' to which she referred was for staff to record the names of those pupils who were misbehaving and mentioned by Mr Benjamin as having been established by his predecessor. With a few exceptions it was now rarely used by teachers but commented upon extensively by pupils and MTAs used it to record playground incidents.

In seeking support from a member of staff Lorraine revealed that she had found it easier to *'talk to a lady rather than a man'* (Int 1). Her preferred choice of approach was definitely 'Adult/Counselling', demonstrated by her selection from her previous class teachers, Mrs Barnes, as she had offered to talk to her whenever she found herself in trouble. In contrast Mr Yates offered her little encouragement *'except when... Mum came in and had a talk to him, then he said if they bully you just tell me'* (Int 1). The receptive Mrs Barnes may have been the sole reason for the preference to report to a female. However, a few minutes later she alluded to being teased by Mr Yates in a manner that, on reflection, she was able to construe as amusing but it had hurt at the time. He had distinguished between Lorraine and another girl with the same name by adding the noun *'pest'*. We were re-visiting the complex question of the deployment of terms such as teasing to describe actions where desire to hurt was not always present and where interpretation of the recipient was crucial. It also served as a reminder that men can more inhibited when dealing with girls on bullying matters (Hoover and Hazler, 1991).

Throughout our interchanges it became clear that Lorraine was dependent on the support of adults or needed to involve them. I sensed that she enjoyed making her contribution to our conversation, and also my company, which was reciprocated. It was not that she required their

authority or power but that they listened to her and she sought affirmation of her rightness from them. She appeared to be comfortable in adult company, but did not wish to be perceived to be 'telling' on her peers. Reluctance to report bullying to teachers for fear of reprisals has been identified by Train (1995) and she certainly exhibited an unwillingness to be seen as a 'dobber,' which might have led to further teasing. Nonetheless she possessed an unquestioning support of the authority of teachers, '*once you're told off by a teacher that's it, you shouldn't do it,*' and this may have contributed to the creation of a persona that irritated some of her peers. In her eyes the authority of the Headteacher was paramount and he was seen by her to be informer and enforcer of the policy that she took for granted as being in place.

4:1(iv) As other pupils saw her

Lor: *If ...I was bullying them I would be surprised.* (Int 1)

This section draws upon the views of Lorraine's peers but with one omission. I was unable to gain Amanda's view on Lorraine, which would have enhanced the case study, especially discussion with Lorraine's mother. During my meetings with Amanda ethics demanded that I could do no more than enquire about incidents from the past and from pupils who might now be in different classes, but responses from her were not to include Lorraine. In itself this raised some significant matters. First, she might be aware that I had spoken with Lorraine and that I knew of the problems between them and, therefore, she did not wish to discuss them. Second, in her terms, there may have been no problem with the relationship or, third, that again admitting to bullying during interviews may be difficult.

Asked who might be 'picked on' in the class only Carly felt that Lorraine was a candidate and here name-calling from Wasim seemed the principal manifestation.

Carly: *I think it's Lorraine Sparrow the most actually because Wasim gets really moody he calls her "porky pig" things like that ... or when Lorraine says 'you've done that' or something like that, then he will go up to her and say 'oh be quiet porky pig'.*

CL: *Is that bullying?*

Carly: *In a way, yes, and in a way, no.*

CL: *Tell me a little bit more?*

Carly: *Because porky pig is sort of like fat, so when he calls her porky pig ... I think it's more or less bullying because he is calling her names and things. (Int 2)*

Yet when I came to Wasim himself a triangle of involvement became evident.

CL: *Who does the picking on Lorraine then?*

Wasim: *The main one is Amanda in 6A. They pick on each other. Amanda is quite big built but she is like, she can handle things more easily. Lorraine is more sensitive. (Int 2)*

The reciprocity of the actions did not mean that equality existed in Wasim's eyes for Lorraine's sensitive nature and Amanda's ability to deal with the exchanges meant that, for Wasim, Amanda possessed the power. A third party had observed the imbalance of power that may have been a feature of this relationship.

Despite sympathy shown to Lorraine, as interviews progressed, it became clear that only one person in each Year 6 class was nominated as having bullied more than one person and on more than one occasion. In class 6A it was Julie and in 6J came the nomination of Lorraine. All three, Debbie, Sandra and Linda saw Lorraine as someone who had bullied them, but the behaviours that they identified were neither identical nor typical of those often considered to be bullying. Debbie felt that she had been pushed deliberately by Lorraine in a playground game, although she added that Lorraine excused it as accidental. What seemed a minor incident had clearly made an impact on Debbie, yet here I felt that, if someone else had carried this out, it might have been recounted as something other than bullying. The pupil who carried out the act was often to prove of more significance than the act itself, suggesting that power over individuals and the intent behind an action were of more significance than hurt experienced.

A similar playground occurrence led to a powerful outburst from Sandra

Sandra: *There's a girl in my class who you just say something and she takes it all the wrong way. She can be really nasty and take all your friends off. I think that you have talked to her - Lorraine Sparrow.*

CL: *In what way is she nasty?*

Sandra: *I remember one time, the week before last on a Friday, we were playing a game. A pole was involved and we changed the pole that Lorraine was on. She got all angry and shouted at everyone and then turned on me and was horrible to me. She was calling me names, started to write messages about me. I discovered that she wrote a message to one of my friends that said 'I hate Sandra.' She is really nasty sometimes.*

CL: *What she does you would call it bullying?*

Sandra: *Well, in a sense, yes. (Int 1)*

I often found these pupils to be thoughtful and prepared to pause before using a word that carried such negative connotations as ‘bullying’.

Recalling past events another pupil, Linda, took little time before selecting Lorraine as a bully. Her judgement was based on accounts that provided further evidence of the significance of terminology. Linda felt that Lorraine used her feelings of being disregarded or neglected to impose herself on the group and manipulate the feelings of others. This culminated in Linda being excluded from the social group, which could be considered a form of bullying (Ahmad et al., 1991). She described a form of ‘passive aggression’ where dominance can be achieved through adopting the role of victim (Townend, 1991).

Talking with and watching these pupils led to my reflection on the concept of an imbalance of power that appears a key feature of bullying relationships. Models that present bullying as always being between the powerful and the powerless hide a complex picture. In Lorraine’s case the bullying came from vying for dominance and it appeared that the search for power between these girls generated problems.

Linda: *She is bossy ... and if we are playing this game or something she’ll think we taking people off of her and she will be horrible to us and she’ll tell. (Int 1)*

Later she added:

Linda *I don't like it ... if they want to be my partner Lorraine always says that I always be Sandra's so I end up walking by myself. (Int 1)*

In the case of an apparently powerful character as Lorraine, it proved difficult to estimate how much her exclusion was generated, ironically, by her desire to be the leader or at the centre of social groups. This might have been exclusion on the basis of being perceived as a bully, or a consequence of exclusion leading to actions interpreted as unpleasant by others, but which were perhaps aimed at inclusion into or dominance over the social group. In the non-fiction literature for pupils there has been encouragement to 'tell' and schools have been urged to cultivate telling cultures (Bryant-Mole, 1992). Lorraine was a pupil who used that very approach, sometimes reluctantly, but others interpreted it as an attempt to acquire status.

Questioned further, Linda offered verification that what she was describing was not just her understanding. Asked about others involved Debbie and Sandra were nominated as well as Julie '*in the other class*'. What she later related suggested that problems which were within the dynamics of the group and involved Lorraine were not just school based in that Linda had experienced difficulties when she had declined an invitation to Lorraine's house because she had been invited elsewhere (Int 1). This incident had resulted in negative exchanges between the pupils and escalated to parental involvement. She concluded this element of the interview on a sorrowful note.

Having watched Lorraine assert herself in the classroom context and observed the consequences of a peer group argument that included Sandra and which led to teacher involvement (25/11/94), Lorraine appeared the axis of negative components of group

relationships. Seen as an occasional friend, she was also often deemed manipulative, aggressive and a bully. Such an analysis was to find a degree of counterbalance in the views of her teacher.

4:1(v) The teacher's verdict

Ms James had been teaching at Nicholas Street School for five years following a series of teaching positions in London, Birmingham and a year in the United States of America. Her classroom was lively, exciting, well organised and the children celebrated their positive relationships with her. Her pupils liked her and the classroom atmosphere was warm and welcoming. When asked if she was concerned about any of her pupils being involved in bullying, she declared reluctance to deploy the term 'bully', but she was more willing to discuss 'victims'.

Ms James: *There are children in this class who feel picked on a lot of the time and I think they are some of the time. It's difficult because a lot of the time they are pushing for it as well. Lorraine Sparrow ... in some ways she is victimised because she is alienated by the children.*

CL: *Alienated?*

Ms James: *I think, it's not all of the time, but it's some of the time because the children will tend to not want to work with her, not want to be her partner. It is improving ... but in September it was terrible because Lorraine can't help herself, or she doesn't help herself. She is very bossy if I can use that term. She will tell children what to do, how to do it and because she is very bright and very able and she is also quite impatient so if she sees somebody struggling she wants to be in there. (Int 1)*

She elaborated by adding an example of Lorraine seeking to interfere in other people's work during the cooking lesson that had taken place during that afternoon. She continued:

Ms James: *I always have to interrupt and say 'Lorraine let's leave people to do it' but what she actually does it she makes herself this victim then, the next session comes and people don't want to be sharing with her, don't want to be doing work with her because they don't want to be told all the time how to do something. She tends to take over.*

CL: *How does she deal with it?*

Ms James: *Well, she becomes very upset and she believes that people are just ignoring her or won't be her partner. For example they have partners for certain things ... and very often Lorraine is the one who joins up in a three because no one has said to her Lorraine, 'I'll be your partner,' ... you can see it in their faces, it's not the truth sometimes and I can understand their points of view because there are times when Lorraine will actually tell me what to do in the classroom ... and I can see how the children feel, because there are times when I want to say Lorraine 'go and sit down because I know what I am trying to do here'. (Int 1)*

Ms James talked about Lorraine's desire, even capacity, to be first for everything, followed with a description of her as 'lovely ... but', before indicating that if others do not 'do it' her way they would be doing 'it wrong'. Lorraine possessed an ability to disempower others with her own competence and by implication their incompetence, indeed she seemed a victim of her ability. Ms James added that there were other gifted pupils in 6J, such as Aimee, heralded as the 'expert' in spelling, to whom others turned without feeling disempowered as her supporting others technique was acceptable to her peers:

Ms James: *Whereas Lorraine will jump in and say, in a certain tone, 'oh you have spelt that wrong let me show you how to do it' and get a piece of paper and organise it for them and write it down and she will even say 'go and get your spelling book for me' and yeah it takes on very much the controlling influence of the person. I think that they feel that they are failing, because they can see how well Lorraine is doing and how good she is and how she is always right and they don't actually want to know that somebody is always right and doesn't make mistakes. (Int 1)*

Referring to her transcript in the second interview, Ms James made sustained references to Lorraine's bossiness yet employed the term 'victim'. Lorraine's need to be *the* key player in class activity and relationships had been obvious. The power that she possessed over others was not sufficient to prevent their turning their attention onto her, indeed, it often seemed to be the basis of the difficulties that she was experiencing. Here, perhaps, was a pupil akin to that which Olweus (1993, p.27) and Stephenson and Smith (1987, p.236) referred to as the 'bully/victim'. Alternatively perhaps she was Olweus's (1993, p.58) 'provocative victim' who 'may be actively disliked also by adults, including the teacher ... may themselves try to bully weaker students.' The term 'provocative' implies a conscious desire to seek negative attention yet Lorraine's displays of outrage suggested that she did not deliberately court bullying. She had her own ways of being noticed without inviting bullying, indeed Lorraine's imperiousness appeared a display of power, even, at times, her chosen way of relating to others. When we reflected upon the incident that I had observed, Ms James saw Lorraine as the possessor of power to which some acquiesced and which others resented.

Although I had raised the matter of Lorraine's problems in her previous class Ms James always drew conversation back to her current context. Amanda, from the other class, was not

well known to her and she did not add any further comment. However, when I had mentioned perpetrators with another member of staff Amanda came immediately to mind in terms of having a history. *'We did have a very dominant girl, Amanda, who had a whole cluster of girls under her control'* (Mr Yates: Int 1) but that power base seemed to have decreased. Her isolation as a form of ring-leader indicated that she had been powerful in the dynamics of that specific context and class group.

Whatever bullying Lorraine was experiencing stemmed from both her relationships within the classroom and her outside social life. Occasional aggressive acts that Lorraine had experienced and carried out were related to less supervised aspects of school life, such as the lunch hour. Nonetheless, while certain bullying actions were often clandestine, the relationships were open and most pupils and teachers were aware of them.

4:1(vi) A parental perspective

Lorraine came to represent many of the problems of finding an unambiguous understanding of the term bullying and the equally perplexing task of identifying it in a series of behaviours or relationships. The next step was to attempt to interview her parents and gain insights into their involvement; their beliefs and understanding about Lorraine's experience; their definition of bullying and their feelings concerning the approach of the school.

Lorraine was the youngest of David and Jennifer Sparrow's three daughters and the only one remaining in primary education. I never met David as he was always at work when I visited

their home to carry out interviews, but Jennifer was prepared, even eager, to offer her ideas. A qualified teacher, but not working at that time, she declared an enthusiasm for my enterprise. Initially we talked about Lorraine joining us for the interviews and Jennifer rejected it, for while she acknowledged the potential value of interchanges, she felt that her daughter might distract her. The more formal part of our first interview began with Jennifer describing Lorraine as someone who has high expectations of others:

Jennifer: *I was quite surprised really because in the family situation with her other sisters she can be quite dominant towards them and gets her own way a great deal and is quite able to manipulate them quite skilfully and yet I remember going down to see her teacher well over a year ago, when she was with Mrs Barnes, and finding out that she was very different in class, and I got quite a surprise actually that she wasn't as strong as I thought. (Int 1)*

It was difficult to imagine the subservient side of Lorraine for, on the basis of observation and data collected, she possessed a capacity to be both dominant and manipulative in the classroom and this was accompanied by a keen sense of outrage. When Jennifer spoke about the relationship with Amanda she displayed similar indignation.

CL: *What sort of things happened to her that drew you to go down to the school?*

Jennifer: *Well the fact that she came home and cried a lot at night, ... the slightest situation at home would bring out a lot of tears. It wasn't a one off situation, this was a whole list of continual things I mean one of the most hurtful things ... was a girl, who she had asked to the house, a girl who had come to her birthday party. (Int 1)*

I assumed that this had been the incident described above by Linda. She continued to relate that Amanda had been a friend and how both girls had been part of a wider group, all of whom seemed at one stage to relate well to one another. When Lorraine had become upset, Jennifer, after some deliberation, elected to intervene and visit the school, finding confirmation that her class teacher at the time, Mrs Barnes, had been advising Lorraine to seek friendship from other groups.

Jennifer: *(It) wasn't just about girls not getting on you felt there was something a little bit more, underneath it all something quite malicious about it. ... There was an intention to hang her on this leash for a long time, she didn't say well we don't want you because you are not part of our group or anything like that I know they did a play once and this girl she was playing something and Lorraine had to go up and do something and this girl sort of spits some sort of venom at her, some line at her. The bit that got to me in the end I was going to bring parents in and everything and actually spoke to him about doing that was that she said to her one day.*

CL: *Who is him?*

Jennifer: *Mr Benjamin. I rang up one day and said right that's it, that's enough. She had actually said to her I hope all your family die, I hope all your family die. ... I actually spoke to him and ... it was sorted out from there I actually spoke to the parents a good while back and they put it down to both of them being quite strong characters, both of them wanting (unclear) you know if Lorraine got into this group, then the other girl felt threatened by it because they are both quite bright, quite articulate girls you know. So we'd actually spoken about this cos I felt, you know you have to be careful cos your daughter could be a person who is doing it to other kids and you have got to make sure what you are saying is right, but um that was a little bit too much I felt that was cruel. (Int 1)*

The last statement was indicative of Jennifer's recognition that parental intervention could be problematic. Throughout the interview there were statements that implied that she was unsure about the degree to which her daughter might be contributing to the situation or that she could be seeking to gain power at the expense of other pupils. These were matched with an acknowledgement that Lorraine had a capacity to irritate others and difficulties regarding peer relationships.

Jennifer: *She drives me through the roof because if I say something to her she will argue the point. She is not an easy child, I have to say, when it comes to developing a relationship.*
(Int 1)

A further feature of the interview was Jennifer's deployment of a variety of the language associated with bullying. She talked about the occasionally dominant and manipulative nature of her daughter, but added how hurt both she and Lorraine had been by the continuous attentions of Amanda, who apparently possessed significant power within the social group.

Jennifer responded positively and without reservation when asked whether the term bullying described what she felt that her daughter had experienced, although she added that the school had not perceived it as such. She felt that the teachers had tried to contend with Lorraine's problems but found it difficult to distinguish between the *'playful in and out of friendships ... and where something becomes bullying'* (Int 1). Our discussions led naturally to an attempt to arrive at a phrase that represented her meaning of the term 'bullying', but the complexities of either the task or circumstances, lead to a series of disconnected thoughts.

Jennifer: *Bullying isn't about a group or something but there was something about that atmosphere that it enveloped other people and before they knew it, whatever dislike it was but it sort of enveloped this whole and before she knew it Lorraine ... couldn't turn around to anybody. All these people who she had been friends with in different years and all that, suddenly it's the whole thing around us that it didn't matter whatever way she was towards them, they always sort of seemed to be able to get at her in some way. (Int 1)*

Jennifer's account went on to reveal that, after some time had elapsed, she resorted to discussing the problem with Amanda's parents. Throughout her account of the role of Amanda no mention was made of the jealousy that might have prompted the attention of Amanda and to which Lorraine herself had referred. Apparently the view of Amanda's parents was that both girls were strong characters and that it had been leadership of the group that was the real problem. Jennifer talked of the influence that Lorraine even had over her older sisters, who were also high achievers at school, but they lacked their sister's desire for leadership.

The school had attempted to manage the situation by placing Lorraine and Amanda in separate groups within the same class and, finally, when I first met them, in different classes. Jennifer emphasised that throughout the incidents the teachers were reluctant to attribute such a pejorative label as 'bullying' and it became downgraded to a relationship difficulty. Resistance to the label had only come from the teaching staff.

Later Jennifer related that her daughter had adopted the persona of the victim and that she felt that this was an image that spread throughout the school community and became the basis of how others interacted with her. If this were the case it rested uneasily with the dominant

personality that Lorraine possessed, according to her peers. Her mother also noted this ambiguity and it led her deliberations into questioning of the clarity of school policy. The hostility towards the school, which had been present at the beginning of our interchanges, became transformed into something more sympathetic, centred on difficulties in recognition.

Jennifer: *I think they try to cope ... it's so difficult to decide where well teasing is not very nice anyway, but where that sort of playful in and out of friendships stops and where something becomes cruel and bullying is going to affect the child ... physically and mentally.*
(Int 1)

Pursuing the matter of the school's approach, in the follow up interview, led to a less enamoured stance. Jennifer believed that the staff saw her as '*an over protective mother*' and that Lorraine was '*bringing the bullying on herself*'. She believed that the school conveyed a view that '*in some ways nature takes its course and things go on*'. This non-interventionist attitude did not replicate the thinking that I subsequently discovered amongst most of the teaching staff, but it did resemble reported inertia that appeared to exist prior to parental intervention. Her insights into the importance of an explicit definition of bullying as part of policy and practice were to prove more accurate.

Jennifer: *I got no impression at all that they... sat down and said 'these are the things we identify as being totally inappropriate and we need to make sure that children aren't bullied or teased to the point that it is so hurtful and it makes them feel unable to cope.'* (Int 2)

The link between dealing with bullying and defining it was proving fundamental at both a theoretical and operational level. Jennifer's opinion was that, unless the school knew what it

believed bullying to be, it could not begin to address it, which had a logic that was counterbalanced by Jennifer's own problems with that very task. Neither of the interviews had produced a succinct definition. Notwithstanding, as she continued, in her occasionally rambling, reflective way, to analyse what she believed had happened to her daughter, significant concepts began to emerge. As we moved towards the conclusion of the first interview she referred to other pupils having *'this sort of power to sort of turn you off and on'* and *'they know they are hurting that person.'* 'Power' and 'hurt' were clearly evident in Jennifer's thinking but her use of the phrase *'they know'* implied intent. No mention was made about such concepts as 'duration' or 'repetition' with interviews serving to further highlight the complexities involved in arriving at precise definitions. Indeed, what I felt I heard initially as a definition was not a distillation of Jennifer's understanding of the term, but sounded more a description of the experience of her daughter and replicated how Lorraine had constructed her ideas. This further suggested the gulf between attempts to offer watertight definitions and the experience of the involved, for whom 'bullying' was that which hurt me and which was meant to hurt me.

Relationships with the teachers were not a problem for Jennifer and she felt able to speak with all of them and raise her concerns. However, for her there were concerns about being open and friendly in the context of a lack of coherent policy in the school. She related that aggressive parenting climates at home may contribute to bullying, adding that what parents needed were clear guidelines from the school with stances made explicit (Int 2).

4:1(vii) Summary

The story of Lorraine was to assume significance for my research. It had woven the home and school context together, presenting complex problems when her experiences were considered from differing perspectives and highlighted the significance of the use of terminology. Again I felt that labels such as ‘bullying,’ ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ convey a model that did not always describe it as it was in the reality of this primary school classroom. There were pupils who genuinely felt that they received aggressive attention from others, but also were deemed by some of those others to be aggressors. The case of Lorraine had come to represent a number of the intricacies that merited further exploration and additionally informed the agendas in future interviews.

Lorraine and her classmates were the first pupil interviews and provided evidence that seeing oneself as a bully, or at least admitting to it, might prove difficult. Questions asked of other pupils would need to encourage them to see things from the perspective of others in the school or class. The story of Lorraine had presented a range of issues to be explored in the next phase of the analysis. Amongst these were that:

- Definitions of bullying, so prominent in the literature, may be problematic in the context of relationships in schools and the area of the attribution of meaning to the term ‘bullying’ merited further exploration.

- Bullying relationships, developed within primary classrooms, not just playgrounds, were significant and that knowledge of these relationships existed amongst teachers. This challenged the notion that bullying was secretive.
- Lorraine's experience highlighted a need for the school to make the issue open and explicit. She had indicated that there were barriers to relating problems to the teacher such as being perceived as '*a dobber*'. There appeared to be tensions in the classroom or school that militated against an open culture and a willingness to raise the subject in a whole school context. Alternatively, perhaps the teacher believed that openness and transparency existed and was based upon their confidence in their own knowledge of the relationships that existed between the pupils.
- It seemed to be important to explore pupils views on the seemingly caring ethos of the school and how it translated into action around bullying.

4:2 DEFINITION

This section of the research is an exploration of the meaning of the term ‘bullying’ for key parties at Nicholas Street School and contains an analysis of data exploring definitions of bullying from teachers, parents and pupils. There is also some consideration of attitudes towards the phenomenon interwoven with responses to requests for definition, although a more detailed consideration of attitude occurs in section 4:4.

4:2(i) Teachers

Before commencing an analysis of teachers’ definitions the context in which they, and other participants in this research, were being asked to define should be explained. Nicholas Street School belonged to a ‘Cluster’ of schools, serving a geographical area that had produced its own policy statement of bullying (Appendices 14-17). The impact of these policy statements is discussed later, but it is relevant to mention that incorporated within them were definitions of bullying, albeit inconsistent ones. When invited to offer their definitions no teacher made reference to the ‘Cluster’ group policy definitions. Instead they took the opportunity, often adding that it was their first attempt, to create a form of words that encapsulated their understanding without the influence of predetermined versions. Their conclusions mirrored their reflective approach and confirmed that defining bullying was a complex task for them.

Earlier I made a distinction between a ‘*definition*’ and a ‘*description*’ and this distinction was evident in the responses of teachers. When analysed teachers’ explanations suggested a third

form was also present in that some perceived bullying to be best understood as a '*continuum*' which went from seemingly minor incidents, such as name calling, to major events that include systematic violence. Not all the definitions offered fitted precisely into the three categories and some of the teachers even offered more than one response as they used the research to enhance their own thinking. The various forms and evolving nature of definition meant that it proved impossible to tabulate teachers' responses in the way that I had from the literature.

Those who defined drew upon the same or similar constructs, such as 'intent', and 'repetition', employed by many writers and researchers to place boundaries around their understanding. For Mrs Saunders the application of 'power' and 'hurt' seemed to be the central to her thinking.

Mrs Saunders: *It's where somebody is putting pressure on another in a way that is hurtful to them.*

Those who described suggested lists of events, real, imagined or both, that fitted their understanding or experience. Occasionally these descriptive forms served as a precursor to attempts at more refined definitions such as that of Mrs Richards (see pages 173-174).

The final group usually acknowledged the complexity of being asked to define before offering a form of words that suggested that bullying was a term that embraced a breadth of interactions and that might be perceived as resembling a continuum.

Mr Yates:

I think that it is a whole range of behaviours, ranging from teasing, to minor non verbal physical incidents, right up to systematic physical abuse of another person ... most bullying is to do with knee jerk reactions. (Int 1)

Following my reluctance to announce my interpretation at the staff meeting, there was often an anticipation of the question. First interviews invariably contained invitations to teachers to offer their own personal construction and a few found it difficult to arrive at a form of words that condensed their own understanding. After inspection of their 'hard copy' version, they often took the opportunity to reflect and returned to the subject in the second interview. It was only Mr Richards who advocated that shared understanding generated by debate and discussion of definitions might form a key component of generating policy and practice.

Mrs Richards:

When you work in an institution such as a school ... if different teachers are holding different definitions in their head, then if we come to talk about it as a staff, we have almost lost before we start, because we are not thinking along the same lines. I don't see how we can come to any policy decisions or actually help the child. (Int 2)

In many respects, her view was an accurate description of what I found amongst the staff. They held disparate definitions, sufficiently different to facilitate the generation of the three forms mentioned above, and that they had not arrived at a consensus may have been related to a lack of perceived need to have agreement or the dearth of attention given to the issue in the school.

From the four Upper School class teachers (Years 5 and 6), with whom I worked more closely, came a difference, not only in emphasis, but style of definition. All were unable to compose a succinct set of words immediately and all were consistent in offering fairly broad models, incorporating ‘teasing’, ‘bullying’, verbal and physical elements.

Ms James: *Somebody is being victimised ... makes them feel like somebody is imposing themselves.*

Ms Alexander: *If you are teasing somebody ... and you do not intend to hurt that person and you recognise them beginning to be uncomfortable, then you stop it. We are talking about verbal teasing and the same sort of thing with physical teasing, things like ... when children grab somebody’s possession and toss it around. That has become sort of physical on a continuum and the point where the person, - the piggy in the middle- is actually distressed.*

Mr Hogan: *Where an individual or individuals experience verbal or physical abuse repeatedly - I would have thought.*

In amplifying her views of a continuum that had physical interactions at one end and verbal interactions at the other, Ms Alexander seemed to imply that one form was less serious than the other was. Mr Yates also adopted the broad stance, adding that premeditation was not often a feature. Some key constructs were employed directly, such as in ‘intent’ and ‘hurt’ by Ms Alexander, ‘repetition’ in Mr Hogan’s insecure attempt, and, less directly, such as the implication of an imbalance of power suggested by ‘*somebody ... imposing themselves*’ from Ms James. ‘Bullying’ did not appear to have consistency of meaning between these four staff and this diversity was repeated in analysis of the ideas of the remaining teaching staff.

Mrs Little, the new Deputy Headteacher, whose definition had gradually evolved spoke of the need to be open-ended about definitions and she raised the potential for multiple perspectives and the inherent dangers of using the label 'bullying' immediately:

Mrs Little: *I think you have to be open-ended in your definition of bullying. The children define it in so many ways, when they tell you that you need to be sufficiently open-minded to listen first and sometimes labelling 'bullying' straight away isn't necessarily the most helpful way to approach it. (Int 1)*

This significant member of staff was among those who used the research process to develop her thinking and even, at times, to contradict her original thoughts. Her inability to arrive at a precise form of words did not feel like indecisiveness, indeed it was more an acknowledgement that precision was problematic, even undesirable. It was not long before I began to discern an expression of the *need for precision* juxtaposed to *a need for flexibility* and openness of interpretation within this relatively small number of teachers.

Mrs Richards, who had pleaded for consensus, ironically illustrated how hard it would be to arrive at an agreed understanding. She contrived a definition that had elements that crossed the boundaries of my categories and providing an example of the thoughtful, occasionally meandering, responses that I found.

Mrs Richards: *Well as you had said that we were going to have this interview a week ago, I have brought it to the fore of my mind and I can't give you a definition in one sentence ... I think it's got something to do with degree. It's almost as if*

there is a level or a line of words that we use like tease, and annoy and, persecute, but that's way up on the scale, intimidate and somewhere along this line fits in this word 'bully'... I think there are different sorts of bullying, there is your sort of physical bullying, but I also think there maybe emotional bullying, non verbal bullying, just people's mannerisms, could be a form of bullying if it was taken to the nth degree of teasing. ... It also involves more than one person ... you need a victim and sort of bully, somebody who is going to in some way persecute the victim it's certainly something to do with an act that upsets another person, another person is hurt in some way by the act being done by the aggressor, the bully. (Int 1)

Her revelation of anticipation of the question testified that even premeditated responses underline the intricacy of the task of definition or that premeditation may have served to confuse. Halfway through the interview she announced her intention to return to her definition. *'I suddenly thought ... I think that it's something persistent. The other thing that I'd thought about is that it's something that happens for this person more than once and maybe there is some sort of premeditation'* (Int 1). As was often the case interviews facilitated reflection and consideration of the vocabulary that informs definitions. Few staff displayed confidence in their initial versions and the process of defining was characterised by high levels of contemplation.

Other definitions included *'layers'* that teachers *'peel away'* (Mrs Little: Int 1) to determine the seriousness and the appropriateness of the term *'bullying'* to a situation, and a *'stage further than just teasing'* (Mrs Adams: Int 1). Here were further indications that bullying might be on a continuum and that it existed at the more sinister end. In Mrs Little's eyes, it

was the responsibility of the teacher to determine which ‘layer’ qualified as serious. The implication was that the power to define, to quantify the hurt experienced and, consequently, to take action, rested with the teacher, but there was no mention of the idea or ways in which pupils might be involved in such a process.

The Headteacher’s first reaction, despite reference to a premeditated component, was more pragmatic. He resorted to the potential impact upon him in his role, rather than seeking to find a form of words that had encapsulated his view.

Mr Benjamin: *Physical violence of the type that threatens to hospitalise a kid. That’s what causes me the problems. It is not just a flare up but is usually predetermined and usually the same children. Some elements of verbal abuse, but you’ve got to grade it (Int 1).*

The need to ‘grade it’ assumed that bullying possessed differing degrees of seriousness, which evoked differing responses from a person in his position. Here was a crucial character in the story of this school’s approach to bullying stating that forethought and deliberation were key elements and that there was a gradation. Whether grading implied that, in his view, physical violence was more serious than verbal abuse was unclear. He reported that *‘real problems are rare’* and that the issue had not been one that the staff had sought to address as a discrete matter. His appraisal of the situation in the school seemed to be a reflection on the dilemma that any headteacher faces admitting to a bullying problem in times when schools were in competition for pupils and concerned about their public image. The ‘Cluster’ group initiatives on bullying were, in reality, the headteachers of local schools attempting to inform policy and

practice and had the added benefit of not being seen as a particular school having a crisis. A second chance to elaborate on the meaning of the term ‘bullying’ provided Mr Benjamin with an opportunity to expand upon his thoughts. This time he adopted a broader concept, comprising, albeit somewhat reluctantly, name-calling and its potentially damaging effect. As his thoughts rambled he incorporated the idea of ‘hurt’ as a component part. He also expressed concern that the term ‘bullying’ was being employed to cover differing forms of interaction before returning to his role and the differentiated interventions required.

Mr Benjamin: *I am sure that children have bullied since the beginning of time by name-calling. We just didn't call it bullying. I still find it difficult to recognise it as bullying ... I recognise that name-calling is hurtful and damaging to a person's confidence. ... I think there is a danger of this umbrella term, bullying, because if you have a violent child and you have a child who is openly calling lots of people nasty names and being abusive and you've got a sly child who focuses on one child and there's this constant 'fatty' or whatever, then you have different types of behaviour and they need dealing with in a different way. (Int 2)*

In terms of the remaining teaching staff both ‘intent’ and ‘hurt,’ sometimes expressed in the form of the impact, were among the more common strands and they were often linked.

Mrs Little: *There is a sense of deliberate hurt behind it. (Int 1)*

Mrs Penfold: *Anybody who uses their strength or their size or their intellect to put down or upset or hurt anybody else to me is a form of bully ... it's mostly deliberate, but sometimes unconscious. (Int 1)*

Mrs Fashin: *Bullying is a pattern of behaviour that intimidates someone else, or makes another person feel uncomfortable or diminishes the other person's efforts. (Int 1)*

Mrs Penfold's reference to 'unconscious' bullying, where the action felt like bullying but a notion of considered intent was not present, in many respects mirrored Rigby's (1996) 'non-malign' concept, in which not all forms of bullying were a consequence of deliberate intent to hurt (Table 1). Similarly the Deputy Headteacher talked of 'deliberate hurt' behind bullying during her initial interview, but having contemplated the significance of her statement, cast doubts on the primacy of hurt, focusing instead on an intent to draw a response from the victim or even a third party such as an adult.

Mrs Little: *I think I'm inclined to believe that the children who do deliberately hurt, that wasn't the prime intention, the hurt wasn't the prime intention, the response is the prime intention, so either the response from the others, or the response from the adult to them doing it, is the prime mover. (Int 2)*

Here bullying was being interpreted as having an attention-seeking element, designed more to have an impact upon relationships with peers than hurting recipients. It follows that bullying involved more than just two groups, bullies and their victims, and might be seen as being part of the process of determining status in settings such as the classroom and the school. If by 'adult' she meant the class teacher there is a suggestion that the teacher knew about the bullying in the classroom and the secrecy element can be questioned. On the other hand, if it was parental attention that was being sought, then issues such as family relationships and dynamics come to the fore. Using the interview as reflective vehicle she was underpinning her thinking with the idea that those who bully do so in order to gain power and status.

Other definitions from the staff were representative of a breadth of forms.

Mrs Monroe: *I consider it could be a one off event but more often than not I would think it's persistent. (Int 1).*

Mrs Monroe: *I think I've even said it here I think of it as persistent abuse rather than a one off thing but now I've come to realise that yeah it can be a one off incident so it's good ... I have become more aware of it. (Int 2)*

Mrs Barnes: *I think bullying is something that maybe works on a continuum, if it's happening all the time and it's upsetting the child, then I would call it bullying. (Int 2)*

Mrs Adams: *I would define bullying as ... something that's consistent, something that happens on a regular basis. (Int 1)*

The notion of a continuum of negative interactions provided a model for Mrs Barnes before she incorporated her ideas of hurt and persistence. Mrs Monroe was clearly wrestling with 'persistence' and was prepared to revise her standpoint, citing our 'chats' as the reason for the change. Lack of conviction about personal construction of bullying seemed to be based on inexperience of being required to define and the complexity of the task. As staff endeavoured to synthesise their experience and understanding into an all-embracing phrase, they sometimes drew upon experience of their pupils and integrated this with more overarching, abstract notions of bullying before committing to a final answer. No mention was made of the 'Cluster' group version. They were engaging in a reflective process and, in many cases, were relating that they had defined bullying for the first time. Given an opportunity to discuss and debate definitions from the literature and share each other's viewpoints, these teachers may well have arrived at different responses or at increased consensus. Perhaps unsurprisingly,

neither parents nor pupils were to appear as tentative or contemplative as the teachers did. By virtue of their educational background, culture and training teachers may be the group who create more refined definitions, but they may also be compelled to do so, in order that they are not wasting time, given the pressures on a modern school (Madsen, 1996). Circumspection on the part of teachers might also be attributed to the emotional distance from a bullying event that they were able to adopt. Unlike parents and children, who may be more directly involved, teachers maintained a distance, perhaps aimed at ensuring impartiality or illustrating that explaining what constitutes bullying is difficult, if not impossible.

4:2(ii) Parents

There were two impediments to the research with parents. First, the limited number of respondents meant the data were less representative of the whole sample. Those who elected to contribute usually had the experience of their children being bullied, despite my stating in the letter inviting parents to participate that their child's involvement in bullying was not a prerequisite. Second, the sample also contained adults who worked in schools. Five of those interviewed and two who completed questionnaires were qualified teachers (Appendix 13). As a result it was difficult to distinguish between responses that were made from either a professional or parental focus, despite my requesting clarity of stance or perception throughout interviews.

The forms of response to requests for definitions from teachers served as a framework for the analysis of responses from parents. Some offered what I have determined as a 'definition' and

one considered 'bullying' as a continuum of negative experiences, which resembled the views of certain teachers. Others detailed or described behaviours that complied with their definition, often drawing upon experiences that had been endured by their own children or themselves when they had been at school.

Replication of a distinction between bullying and 'nasty' teasing, posed in pupil questionnaires, with its implied differentiation, was included in the parental equivalents. The phrase 'nasty teasing' resembled the 'teased ... in a nasty way' employed in the Sheffield Project definition in pupil questionnaires (Smith and Sharp, 1994), where it was made clear that such behaviour definitely formed a subset of bullying, if undertaken repeatedly. For the majority of respondents 'nasty teasing' was a term that best described taking something from another pupil or name calling, whereas 'bullying' was often reserved for physical acts and this resembled responses from children.

Mrs Siskin:

Bullying: *Showing aggression to other children (physical).*
Nasty teasing: *Saying hurtful things to each other (mental).*

Mrs Dunlin:

Bullying: *Involves physical harm or the threat of physical harm on one of more people by a group of usually bigger or older pupils.*
Nasty teasing: *Name calling, hair pulling, alienation ... and generally mentally abusing a person*

Mrs Dunlin modified her answer by explaining that bullying was usually the prerogative of boys. This was a significant distinction given that Whitney and Smith (1993) were to find that the nature of bullying amongst girls was less likely than boys to involve physical violence and

it was more likely to incorporate a higher incidence of social exclusion or malicious verbal comment.

There were a limited number of references to inequalities of power or size in a variety of forms, which fell short of being what I have called a definition, although Mrs Eider and others were beginning to formulate a broader concept.

Mrs Eider: *Taking advantage of another person who is maybe weaker or stands out in some way*

Mrs Teal: *Someone who thinks he or she is better than others and enjoys pushing other around and making them look small.*

Mrs Dunlin: *Usually done by boys or larger girls and involves physical harm or the threat of physical harm.*

Mrs Wren and Mrs Jackdaw decided that bullying and nasty teasing were synonymous. In the case of the latter there was an expression of bullying as a process that involved the acquisition of power through an individual or repeated act.

Mrs Jackdaw: *Seeking to gain an emotional or physical superiority over another by a single or continuous act of physical or mental abuse.*

There was no predominant construct in the answers of parents. 'Intent' was to be found in various forms in the use of 'seeking to' (Mrs Jackdaw), 'deliberately' (Mrs Bittern), and 'trying to belittle' (Mrs Redstart). The parents did have one clear statement to make and that

was in terms of impact. In answering ‘which is worse?’, they almost unanimously replied that there was no distinction with only one respondent indicating that bullying was more serious.

Parents’ definitions derived from interviews offered broader, reflective, perspectives and drew upon the key constructs, but they rarely matched the circuitous wanderings of teachers’ attempts. They confirmed that definitions of bullying might be related to the formulation of questions and methodological issues as much as personal understanding. The nature of the research instrument elicited differing forms of response, with the questionnaire having limited lines and interviews inviting respondents to contemplate the idea at length. This permitted increased opportunities, both in terms of time and space, to generate an impression of a lack of conviction or an acknowledgement of the complexity of the task.

Interview responses included a range of differing concepts with individual strands, although rarely more than one, included. Thus:

Mr Heron:

Imbalance of power: *The exertion of fear over somebody else.*

Mrs Heron:

Imbalance of power: *Physical or mental abuse.*

Mrs Finch:

Imbalance of power: *Where one person feels in some way intimidated by another by means of ... verbal or physical pressure.*

Mrs Dove:

Repetition: *A repetitive action and it has a protagonist ...with an outcome.*

Mrs Lark:

Hurt:

I think bullying is more to do with how the victim receives the abuse. Whether they are ... hurt emotionally, physically or whatever.

Mrs Brambling:

Repetition:

You can deliberately hurt them but that is not bullying. I think it's got to be persistent and perhaps you do more and more and you get cleverer and cleverer.

Mr Nightingale:

Intent/ repetition:

I suppose it's being deliberately nasty continually.

The only emotive statement occurred when Mr Heron adopted the second person and drew upon two specific forms, hitting and teasing, to illustrate how the recipient becomes disempowered.

Mr Heron:

Intent/imbalance of power:

You are scaring, you are getting them scared of either being hit or being unmercifully teased to the point where somebody will do practically what you want rather than face that.

In essence definitions from both teachers and parents seemed more pensive than emotional. In Mr Heron's stance was a passion similar to that found amongst pupils and was likely to be linked to Mr Heron's experience of his children being bullied and his views on how his daughter should defend herself were quite strident. At the time of the action he felt she had been alone and needed fairly aggressive forms of self-defence because *'at that point nobody else is'* there for support. Countering such feelings of alienation had clear implications for school policy.

Parents were able to encapsulate their ideas in briefer statements than teachers, who often adopted more meditative approaches prior to arriving at a form of words. An exception was Mrs Crane, a teacher/parent, who conveyed insecurities in her understanding of the term ‘bullying’, with a clear need for affirmation from me that she was correct, and a parting phrase of self-doubt.

Mrs Crane:

Imbalance of power/
Duration *Bullies only really persist when they feel that somebody has got a weakness and if they come across someone who just shrugs it off ... they very often move on to an easier victim, don't they? I suppose in that sense it does need to be persistent doesn't it? Either a child can deal with it or they keep getting picked on, that seems to be a symptom of bullying, that seems to be part of a syndrome doesn't it, I think.*

Like the teachers these parents had the opportunity to access the definition sent by the ‘Cluster’ group but similarly not one utilised it, referred to it or matched its breadth and precision.

Finally, only Mrs Jay perceived the playground as central and a somewhat bleak environment in which the negative side of the pupils interactions was displayed (Blatchford, 1998).

Mrs Jay: *In the playground children are inherently bad, I believe, it's a playground game that goes one step too far.*

In summary, like teachers, there were both consensus and dissonance in the reported definitions from parents. Parents exhibited a limited use of the constructs of definitions of bullying that informed so much of the literature on the subject. Their versions were concise

and contained only one or two of the constructs, indicating a relatively narrow perspective. As with the teachers, parents' versions exhibited variations in meaning attributed to the term 'bullying' and given their key significance in dealing with incidents, there appeared to be a need for increased awareness of the disparate meanings that 'bullying' can have and how these might influence practice.

4:2(iii) Pupils

a) The Bullying Definition 'game'

In the 'getting in' phase I had talked informally with pupils about their understanding of the term 'bullying' and it became clear that gaining pupils' construction was going to demand a different form of research tool, hence the 'game'. It was based upon giving groups of pupils brief descriptions of incidents on strips of card, each of were numbered to facilitate ease of recording (Table 6). Groups of pupils, identified here by a capital letter, were invited to decide whether the incident described matched their understanding of bullying (see Chapter 3). A rank order was devised using a simplistic method of awarding two points for a 'definitely bullying' decision and one point for 'could be bullying' (Table 7). Listening to and noting comments made throughout the process supported the analysis and provided insights into debate and discussion before a decision.

Table 6: Items in the Bullying Definition 'game'.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Act</i>
1	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls in the class call him 'thicky' but only behind his back.
2	Jane puts a worm in Julie's bag. She knows that she is frightened of worms.
3	Mick tells Chris that, if he doesn't do everything that he says, he will tell the teacher that Chris was being naughty.
4	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls in the class call him 'thicky' to his face.
5	Jennifer has a hearing impairment and some of the pupils in the class deliberately whisper so that she cannot hear them talking.
6	Maurice has asthma and cannot do games every week. One of the girls is always mentioning this and making him feel bad about it.
7	David tells George that if he does not give him 50p a week he is going to beat him up.
8	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week.
9	Philip's parents have divorced and Mark tells everyone in the class.
10	Keith and Alan refuse to let Asmat play with them
11	Keith and Alan refuse to let Richard play with them.
12	David kicks Sally's bag and it goes all over the classroom.
13	Harry kicks Mike's bag on purpose and it goes all over the playground.
14	John always nudges Max when he passes him in the playground.
15	Every time Jenny goes past Adele in the playground she pulls her long hair and she knows that it hurts.
16	Sarah and her family go to church on Sundays. Two boys in her class at school call her names because of this.
17	Ben spends all the playtime following Matthew and tapping his arm, even though Matthew says that he wants to be left alone
18	A group of older boys will not let anyone else play football at break. They take the ball away or interfere in the game.
19	Caroline's father has just been made unemployed. Helen tells all the class and starts to call her 'little poor girl'.
20	Natalie has nicknamed Pauline 'scruffy'.
21	Mick, Jake and Paul refuse to speak to Harry for a whole week.
22	Danny spits in a can of lemonade and makes David drink it.
23	Natalie has nicknamed Pauline 'scruffy' and, as a result, all the class are beginning to call her that too.
24	Helen keeps telling other children that Mandy smells - it is true.
25	Helen keeps telling other children that Mandy smells.
26	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two staff in the school call him 'thicky' but only behind his back.
27	Danny spits in a can of lemonade and says he will make David drink it.
28	David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class, at his expense, and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Act</i>
29	David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead.
30	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week because she has been telling the teacher that they bring sweets to school, which is against the rules.
31	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week because she has been whispering about them to some boys in the class.
32	For no obvious reason, Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week.
33	Every time that Nicky walks into the class a group of pupils laugh and whisper to each other about him.
34	Every time that Nicky walks into the class a group of pupils laugh and whisper to each other.
35	A group of older boys will not let anyone else play football at break.
36	The youngest boy in the class is helped by two of the oldest ones.
37	Sam, Charlie and Nicky are talking about raising money with a sponsored walk.
38	In the corner of the room Michael is working with John and they are giggling about something.
39	Teresa and Sally talk with Jenny during the lunchtime and they talk about what they watched on television.
40	Nicholas and Ben play football with Adam who is often left out at playtimes.
41	Emma and Charlie help Darren with his reading in class.
42	When Karl leaves his bag in the classroom, two boys from the class sneak in and pour water into it.
43	When Jane is not looking one of her classmates writes all over her neat piece of work and spoils it.

Table 7: Rank Order from Bullying Definition 'game'.

(Raw scores and their derivations have been included. 24-2-0 means 24 groups voted an act as 'definitely bullying', 2 thought it 'could be bullying' and no group felt that it was 'not bullying').

Rank	Act	Pts	Deriv -ation
1	David tells George that if he does not give him 50p a week he is going to beat him up.	52	26-0-0
1	Jane puts a worm in Julie's bag. She knows that she is frightened of worms.	52	26-0-0
1	Caroline's father has just been made unemployed. Helen tells all the class and starts to call her 'little poor girl'.	52	26-0-0
4	Every time Jenny goes past Adele in the playground she pulls her long hair and she knows that it hurts.	51	25-1-0
5	Mick tells Chris that, if he doesn't do everything that he says, he will tell the teacher that Chris was being naughty.	50	24-2-0
5	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls in the class call him 'thicky' to his face.	50	24-2-0
5	A group of older boys will not let anyone else play football at break. They take the ball away or interfere in the game.	50	24-2-0
5	Danny spits in a can of lemonade and makes David drink it.	50	24-2-0
5	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two staff in the school call him 'thicky', but only behind his back.	50	24-2-0
5	When Karl leaves his bag in the classroom, two boys from the class sneak in and pour water into it.	50	24-2-0
11	When Jane is not looking one of her classmates writes all over her neat piece of work and spoils it.	49	23-3-0
12	Jennifer has a hearing impairment and some of the pupils in the class deliberately whisper so that she cannot hear them talking.	48	23-2-1
13	Maurice has asthma and cannot do games every week. One of the girls is always mentioning this and making him feel bad about it.	47	21-5-0
13	Sarah and her family go to church each Sunday and two boys in her class at school call her names because of this.	47	21-5-0
15	Harry kicks Mike's bag on purpose and it goes all over the playground.	44	19-6-1
15	Helen keeps telling other children that Mandy smells - it is true.	44	18-8-0
17	Philip's parents have divorced and Mark tells everyone in the class.	42	16-10-0
17	Natalie has nicknamed Pauline 'scruffy' and, as a result, all the pupils are beginning to call her that too.	42	17-8-0
19	Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls in the class call him 'thicky', but only behind his back.	41	16-9-1
19	For no obvious reason, Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week	41	15-11-0
21	A group of older boys will not let anyone else play football at break.	39	15-9-2
22	David kicks Sally's bag and it goes all over the classroom.	38	12-14-0

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Act</i>	<i>Pts</i>	<i>Deriv -ation</i>
23	Every time that Nicky walks into the class a group of pupils laugh and whisper to each other about him.	35	9-17-0
24	Keith and Alan refuse to let Asmat play with them	33	10-13-3
24	Natalie has nicknamed Pauline 'scruffy'.	33	8-17-1
24	Danny spits in a can of lemonade and says he will make David drink it.	33	8-17-1
27	David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead.	32	10-12-4
27	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week because she has been telling the teacher that they bring sweets to school, which is against the rules.	32	8-16-2
29	John always nudges Max when he passes him in the playground.	31	8-15-3
30	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Teresa for a week.	30	4-22-0
30	Mick, Jake and Paul refuse to speak to Harry for a week.	30	4-22-0
30	Helen keeps telling other children that Mandy smells.	30	7-16-3
33	Ben spends all the playtime following Matthew and tapping his arm, even though Matthew says that he wants to be left alone	29	6-17-3
34	Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week because she has been whispering about them to some boys in the class.	28	5-18-3
34	Each time that Nicky walks into the class a group of pupils laugh and whisper to each other.	28	3-22-1
36	Keith and Alan won't let Richard play with them.	26	4-18-4
37	David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class, at his expense, and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead.	23	4-15-7
38	In the corner of the room Michael is working with John and they are giggling about something.	16	0-16-10
39	Nicholas and Ben play football with Adam who is often left out at playtimes.	5	1-3-22
40	Emma and Charlie help Darren with his reading in class.	2	0-2-24
41	The youngest boy in the class is helped by two of the oldest ones.	0	0-0-26
41	Sam, Charlie and Nicky are talking about raising money with a sponsored walk.	0	0-0-26
41	Teresa and Sally talk with Jenny during the lunchtime and they talk about what they watched on television.	0	0-0-26

Analysis of the 'game' begins with consideration of the items more highly rated as bullying. Of all the incidents devised only one fitted clearly into actions that are associated with the more extreme forms described as bullying, in this case extortion including a threat of violence.

7) *David tells George that if he does not give him 50p a week he is going beat him up. (52)*

It was one of the three that headed the rank order and pupils needed little reflection time with few comments being added about it. This was not the case with Incident 2.

2) *Jane puts a worm in Julie's bag. She knows that she is frightened of worms. (52)*

Here the decision was that it constituted bullying and Group S embellished their selection by highlighting that it had been executed with intent, ie it was '*done on purpose*'. What also appeared to impact on choice was that, first, the worm was considered an unpleasant creature and, second, there had been deliberate exploitation of a fear.

19) *Caroline's father has just been made unemployed. Helen tells all the class and starts to call her 'little poor girl'. (52)*

Drawing attention to a parent being made unemployed aroused as much indignation as the subsequent name-calling and any stigma attached to unemployment appeared to be greater than that associated with the divorce mentioned in Incident 9. Although name-calling ensued in the case of Caroline, telling 'everyone in the class' left some doubts about whether the impact was negative. Throughout the 'game' the context and motive behind the act was to prove as meaningful as the act itself.

A further set of discussions that focused on the intent and deliberation behind an act involved kicking an object. Kicking a bag on the playground (13) was rated more highly than the similar event in the classroom (12). Yet again whether it was *undertaken 'on purpose'* appeared important, especially in the discussion of Groups E, K and O, where the focus of debate was on whether the more lowly rated 'Sally's bag' had an accidental element. It lacked the essential degree of premeditation and secrecy that contributed towards the higher rating of Incidents 2 and 13.

- 3) *Mick tells Chris that, if he doesn't do everything that he says, he will tell the teacher that Chris was being naughty. (50)*

Many groups commented on the familiarity of this form of behaviour and that they had noticed or experienced similar threats, especially the informing teacher component. Group J alone went as far as to label this *'blackmail'*. Here 'telling' assumed a sinister significance that may have an impact upon pupils' willingness to inform adults, especially given recommendations from literature directed at children (Herbert, 1995) and advice from the Cluster group policy to 'tell' if bullying had been experienced bullying (Appendix 14).

- 1) *Karl cannot read very well but is also okay at most things in school. Two girls in the school call him 'thicky' but only behind his back. (41)*
- 4) *Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two girls in the school call him 'thicky' to his face. (50)*
- 26) *Karl cannot read very well but is okay at most other things in school. Two staff in the school call him 'thicky' but only behind his back. (50)*

These experiences of Karl provided a rich source of debate and discussion within groups. Name-calling 'to his face' was bullying because of its direct nature and pupils' comments

were often embellished with expressions of sympathy for anyone who had experienced such difficulties. However, Incident 26 lacked such directness, indeed, the only distinction between this and Incident 1 was the word 'staff' replacing 'girls', but there was clear difference in their ranking. Groups H and K were amongst those who considered the staff factor as a key issue here, yet group K were to place Incident 1 in the 'could be' column because, for it to qualify as bullying, the pupil should *'know it is being done'*. That staff might make such remarks outraged many groups and contributed to its high ranking although, in both indirect cases, Karl may never have found out. Again contextual issues, in this case the status of the perpetrator and the powerless of the recipient, may be as significant as the act itself and the key strand here appeared to be that of 'imbalance of power', especially power possessed by teachers. Perhaps it called into question Rigby's phrase 'non-malign' (1997, p.17) quoted earlier in the chapter to describe insensitive, negative interactions used by the more powerful groups in school such as teachers. If such a differentiation can be made who defines whether bullying is 'malign' or 'non-malign' would seem to be relevant.

The power of perpetrators was a key factor in determining levels of outrage that accompanied the reaction of pupils. Another was the degree of distaste that was present in actions such as 'spitting' or the aforementioned 'worm'.

22) *Danny spits into a can of lemonade and makes David drink it. (50)*

27) *Danny spits into a can of lemonade and says he will make David drink it. (33)*

In both incidents there was no obvious 'persistence', 'hurt' nor 'repetition' but, in 22, the carrying out of the deed was more sinister than the threat of 27. Children felt that coercion

and the fact that they knew that *it had happened* meant that this event qualified as bullying. In 27 Danny's action clearly had 'intent' but lacked evidence of action and subsequent 'hurt'. In this context intent alone seemed insufficient for the term bullying to be applied, it also needed evidence of action and consequent suffering. Despite the distasteful nature of Danny's action or intention, it was remote from the children's everyday experience whereas the name-calling experienced by Karl was very tangible and real for them. If pupils had observed or experienced similar behaviour it appeared to be more likely to be classified as bullying.

Often conversation turned from undertaking the task in hand to relating events that had been happening in their classes. On two occasions groups mentioned recent experiences such as the parental splits experienced by both Brian and Sharon from 5Y, and their aggressive outbursts after they had been teased about it. When this occurred I felt ethically bound to remind participants of the task, as I wanted to avoid public dwelling on personal circumstances.

18) *A group of older boys will not let anyone else play football at break. They take the ball away or interfere in the game. (50)*

15) *Every time Jenny goes past Adele in the playground she pulls her long hair and she knows that it hurts. (51)*

Each of the above playground behaviours had specific components that compelled groups towards categorising them as bullying. Incident 18 drew upon an observation during the 'getting in period' and was certainly authentic for the pupils, even though the impact upon other pupils' games was often more accidental in reality than that related here. 'Hurt' and 'repetition' were present in Incident 15, but it was more the repetitive element that focused the thinking of particular groups and influenced their decision.

The descriptions afforded highest rankings indicated that there were no predominant themes. Included were physical, verbal and psychological forms of aggression and a variety of the constructs identified in definitions. Interactions that included exclusion, extortion, intimidation and assault were featured and any definition constructed from this data would be broad and open-ended, but that very breadth was beginning to become prominent in my thinking about pupils' construction of bullying. It appeared that it was not just the action that determined whether an event could be categorised as bullying, but a range of factors including pupils' own experience, contextual information and the relationship between those involved.

I then turned to review the behaviours that caused dispute or were problematic and often assigned to the 'could be bullying' section. Discussion usually focused on what further information would have rendered the action more likely to be classified as bullying, as was the case for Group A, where the motive behind Mark informing everyone in the class was vital. One of the groups suggested that he might have been trying to be helpful or even acting under instructions from Philip and more information was required.

9) *Philip's parents have split up and Mark tells everyone in the class. (42)*

23) *Natalie has nicknamed Pauline 'scruffy' and now all the pupils are beginning to call her that too. (42)*

Group K felt that calling Pauline 'scruffy' might be bullying if she was concerned by it. Like similar incidents where there was debate within a group or the choice was the 'could be' column, the resolution and subsequent choice was usually based upon the intent or resultant hurt behind an action. These appeared to be the key strands of bullying in this part of the analysis.

Forms of peer exclusion were prevalent in the list and a key motive behind allocation to ‘could be bullying’ was the contribution that the potential victim had made to interactions. There may have been good reasons why Teresa (8), Harry (21) and Richard (18) had been excluded, as was the case with Jane (31 and 30). In the two cases involving the latter, there was a view from some children that informing the teacher about rule breaking (30) was less of a reason for exclusion than ‘whispering ... to some boys’ (31).

Actions like that of ‘laughing’ generated considerable doubt and debate but, when it was possible to identify a potential victim, Nicky (33 and 34), and it was clear that it was directed at him personally, as it was in one incident, there was an increased tendency to regard this as bullying. ‘Intent’ and ‘hurt’ again appeared to be paramount for they provided the motive behind the act and the consequence of the action.

- 28) *David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class, at his expense, and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead. (23)*
- 29) *David is fed up with the teasing that Nancy does in class and he lashes out at her with a pencil and scratches her forehead. (32)*

Adapted from an event that I witnessed and discuss elsewhere, the David and Nancy vignettes aroused considerable discussion and I sensed that their authenticity had a resonance. Both events generated reactions from many groups, but rarely about the difference between them, which was a violent outburst from someone who had been teased directly in one and not necessarily directly in the other. Much was made of who should be construed as the perpetrator and, in many cases, Nancy’s actions merited the label and that David’s contribution had been little more than retaliation. That the reactive nature of revenge should not be considered as bullying was the leading, but not unanimous, response. Like many

groups, Group I spent several minutes deliberating before their decision to see it as bullying and Group J emphasised that *'getting back'* was not bullying and *'it served her right'*, which was a view echoed by Group B who felt that *'David was just getting his own back'*. Groups R and S confirmed that *'revenge was not bullying'* and there was no reference to the less directly personal act (29) in that there was no evidence of his being teased by Nancy. *'Nancy is definitely the bully'* were the identical opinions of Groups L and T, with the former adding that she had been *'the teaser'*. Only Group O were critical of David for loss of temper and Groups D and X assumed a compromise position, concluding that *'they are as bad as one another'* and *'are bullying each other'* respectively. Of all the incidents these two were to cause the most discussion and debate. Within this pairing was an act of physical violence that may well have warranted the label bullying and a relationship founded upon negative teasing, repeated over a period of time, which pupils appeared to feel was more serious. Adding this to the idea of a continuum mentioned by teachers, I had the embryo of the idea that 'bullying' could be a term that applied to a continuum with a single, hurtful action at one end and a relationship that was based on repeated, long term bullying at the other.

In a similar real event, described in more detail later, Ms Alexander (11/11/94) had punished Robin for hitting out at Julie and had labelled him 'a bully'. The violent, yet provoked reaction, modified in the vignettes in the 'game', was a sharp contrast to the persistent teasing aimed at Robin by Julie. My thoughts, at the time, were about the tendency to use the term 'bullying' easily in cases of violence, in the high emotion of a situation, without deliberating on the appropriateness of usage. Ms Alexander had been discriminating and reflective in her use of terminology throughout our formal and informal conversations, yet within an emotive,

real situation, where control was required over the pupils, the term 'bully' and all the implications of the label carried were present.

This incident was also to present an ethical dilemma in that Robin and Julie were to participate in the 'game' and, even though I had changed it, they might recognise it. Fortunately, neither appeared to notice and after both had played it in their separate groups, I confirmed that both had nothing to add and had enjoyed the experience after we had returned to the classroom.

Another pairing of incidents that generated discussion were:

10) *Keith and Alan refuse to let Asmat play with them. (33)*

11) *Keith and Alan refuse to let Richard play with them. (26)*

The problems of distinguishing between racism and bullying (Loach and Bloor, 1995) were present in this situation, although they were not to form a major element in this thesis because of the ethnic composition of the school. Group J almost placed Incident 10 in the 'could be' category, but the apparent racial overtone aroused sufficient outrage for it to be considered as bullying and, similarly, Group O also responded more to Asmat's supposed race than the act itself. In some cases the racist factor was to lead to more indignation from the pupils than many more overtly bullying incidents. When Bruce from Group N commented that maybe Richard was also 'coloured' both events were switched to 'bullying'!

Aside from any racial element what was happening was that an act was more likely to be defined as bullying when pupils were in sympathy with the victim. In the case of Asmat I

sensed outrage generated by assumptions of racism, but I doubted whether such indignation would have existed if the victim had been a child whom others could understand being bullied. Kevin, Edward and Lorraine, whose experiences are described elsewhere, could be said to qualify for this sub-group and I was struck by the lack of compassion that they generated when their peers referred to them during interviews. There was ambivalence, even tolerance on occasions, but usually they were regarded negatively and rarely with concern. In the society of this school, attitude to the victim may well determine whether negative experiences would be classified as bullying. I felt that the abstract, distant nature of the 'game' could have generated more tolerance than knowing the pupil as a classmate.

All the events mentioned previously had the *potential* to hurt. Only in one case was the word 'hurt' itself employed, and this to describe the effect of hair pulling, which could have contributed to the high ranking of this item. The consequence of unpleasant teasing resulting in Maurice feeling 'bad' in Incident 6 did not seem to have the same impact and it received little comment from groups during the process of the game. In contrast name-calling and making derogatory comments about pupils often prompted discussion within groups. Group L felt that for Incidents 24 and 25, ie saying that a fellow pupil smells, to be classified as bullying, the truth or otherwise, of the comments was irrelevant as what was significant was whether Helen would be hurt by the action. Group H raised the idea that she may even enjoy the attention, '*depends whether she likes it*' and this was echoed in Incident 23 where Group O '*felt she might not mind*' and Group S thought that it '*depends whether she likes being called scruffy*'. In these cases it was the consequence, in terms of the degree of hurt perceived, that proved as significant as the act itself.

Throughout this activity the furore with which many top ranked incidents were greeted highlighted the passion that the children felt about such behaviours. Their responses contrasted with the thoughtful, more considered manner in which staff formulated their definitions and talked about their pupils. From the analysis of group decisions it would appear that pupils defined bullying:

- by the outcome of the act and the hurt caused rather than the act itself;
- by the more outrageous or repulsive the act and the emotions it aroused;
- with ‘hurt’ and ‘intent’ as the predominant constructs, but with a clear awareness of the power that pupils can possess;
- in physical, verbal and psychological forms with none of these appearing to be dominant;
- by the level of sympathy for the victim that appeared to be generated by the incident.

Key to pupils’ understanding are contextual issues such as who are the participants, how much can children relate to or sympathise with the experience of the victims and what was the outcome. Those researchers, like myself, who have employed definitions at the *outset* of their research may well have omitted essential information or even selected a dubious methodology.

b) Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 10) permitted further exploration of pupils’ views and experiences of bullying from which basic statistical data have been tabulated (Appendix 18).

It also provided an opportunity to further explore their understanding of the term ‘bullying’ and issues arising from interviews, ie the difference, if any, between bullying and hurtful or unpleasant teasing. Teasing possesses the capacity to be both malicious and playful (Pawluk, 1989), whereas bullying would only appear to be the former. Schools then face the problem of distinguishing between the two (Mooney et al., 1991) and I sought a form of words that differentiated between potential meanings. As mentioned previously, the adjective ‘nasty’ has been deployed most often in the literature and research to distinguish the forms of teasing (Smith, 1991).

In this section of the analysis I have bracketed numbers after quotations indicating year group with the first digit and questionnaire order number in the two subsequent digits. To promote authenticity the original spelling has been retained.

Findings from pupil questionnaires reported a distinction between bullying and teasing with the latter involving less physical acts, which matched similar evidence from parental questionnaires. Both were considered ‘as bad as one another’ in the majority of responses (Table 8).

Table 8: Pupils’ view on relative seriousness of bullying and teasing: questionnaire responses.

<i>Which is worse? (please just tick one)</i>			
		<i>Bullying is worse than nasty teasing</i>	
		<i>Nasty teasing is worse than bullying</i>	
		<i>They are both as bad as one another</i>	
Response	Raw score	%	Valid %
Bullying worse	19	18.3	19.2
Teasing worse	4	3.8	4.0
Both as bad ...	76	73.1	76.8
<i>Valid cases 99; Missing cases 5</i>			

Almost half of the respondents listed behaviours such as hitting, calling names, pulling hair and damaging work as part of their definition. The other half of the sample included the term ‘hurt’ or ‘upset’ with the former being more frequently employed, indeed the only other strand employed extensively was ‘intent’. There was a solitary recognition of ‘repetition’.

Something that someone keeps doing every day to you. (522)

This respondent continued with an expression that nasty teasing was not as serious as bullying, which may have been related to a subsequent admission of having teased *‘for a bit of a laugh’*. He was not the only pupil to perceive teasing as potentially enjoyable, illustrating the value of pupils sharing their understanding and discussing how impact and perception of events can be different.

Interwoven with lists of behaviours was the key concept of ‘hurt’. It was possible to discern distinctions in the expressions of hurt. There was ‘hurt’ that was a consequence of an action, there was that which damaged feelings rather than caused physical pain and ‘hurt’ defined by the interpretation and reaction of the recipient.

It is when you hurt inside. (616)

... is something to make people upset and hurt their feelings. (621)

I think bullying is horrible because it hurts people’s feelings. (503)

Where someone pushes you and hurts you inside by calling you names or doing things you don’t like. (608)

... a horrible thing and could hurt someone else. (603)

Some people call me tich and it really upsets me. (525)

Despite being fewer in number, there were statements that mirrored adult attempts to articulate a definition. Two thoughtful suggestions embraced ideas of premeditation and hurt:

I think bullying is when someone is out to hurt you and is deterred to do it in the most hurtful way (601)

It is a desire to hurt someone and it is nasty (620)

The latter included both an expression that bullying was unsavoury, interwoven with an expression of outrage.

Where an imbalance of power was mentioned or implied it was associated with age and size as the sources of that power. Related to the issue of power was a solitary opinion that developed an idea of compulsion (622).

Forcing someone to do something or if someone called you something and you hit them. (622)

When someone picks on little ones like 6th years picking on a third year. (605)

When you go up to someone younger than you and start punching them and kicking them and biteing them. (614)

Something that people do to people who are weaker than them. (650)

Four respondents stated that nasty teasing was more serious than bullying. The reasons behind their answers offered poignant reminders that the physical elements of bullying were not

always the most hurtful countering the initial reaction of some adults and children on questions of definition. Included were:

Nasty teasing is worse than because kicking and thumping does 'sent hurt for long but names stay with you. (537)

Nasty teasing ... is worse because it can hurt you more than a hit or a kick. (622)

Not only were the majority of pupils stating that bullying and teasing were both serious, but also that teasing might merit the close attention of those charged with countering bullying, if for no other reason than teasing might initiate pupils into a bullying culture (Cullingford, 1993) or become acceptable, thus rendering a school culture vulnerable to bullying.

From the questionnaires there were two additional conclusions. First, pupils often defined bullying as a list of undesirable behaviours, not in the forms usually found in the literature, which may have methodological implications for future research in this area. Second, their definitions reaffirmed the centrality of 'hurt', the significance of 'intent' and they generated a feel of an imbalance of power, but they rarely included the other constructs.

I have argued that how bullying is defined has implications for practice in the way that adults and children make sense of the phenomenon and how it is countered. The majority of participants appeared to be addressing the meaning that the term 'bullying' had for them for the first time with resulting self-doubt and contradiction in evidence. There was evidence of single events and long term negative relationships qualifying as bullying and an indication that those involved in the research used it to begin to create or refine their understanding. The

vocabulary of the constructs supported their attempts, but very few used the full variety of strands used by researchers or displayed total confidence in their definition. In a culture in which children are encouraged 'to tell' and seek support of adults it seems crucial that both parties have an awareness of what it is they are reporting. It may be that bullying cannot be defined exactly. Indeed the evidence here would suggest that it is almost certain. However, with such an emotive term being employed extensively in contemporary education the process of seeking meaning had the potential to benefit all groups. While consensus may not have been achievable, engaging in reflection on terminology would seem to have the benefits of rendering the issue an open one, developing a shared vocabulary and highlighting that there are various perceptions on what is meant by 'bullying'.

4:3 EXPERIENCE

Amongst the pertinent findings from the above analysis were that the actors may be as significant as the action. The following section reports on the experience of bullying for pupils of Years 5 and 6 and how this relates to the stories that their teachers had to tell. There is amplification from data from teachers of the other classes and from parents. Regarding pupils there is an examination of their perceptions of any bullying experienced and how terms such as ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ rested within their culture. I have focused on:

- pupils talking about being bullied and bullying;
- the stories of pupils in Years 5 and 6 in relation to bullying amongst members of their classes;
- how the four Upper School teachers saw matters;
- what the remaining teachers said about bullying amongst pupils in their classes.

In the case of the parents, few provided extensive accounts of the involvement of their children in bullying and with little direct reference to the four classes investigated. With the exception of Jennifer Sparrow, when personal experience of bullying was mentioned it was often in relation to how parents felt about the way that the school handled matters and has been included in section 4:4. Consequently the focus remains on experiences recounted by the children and their teachers.

4:3(i) On bullying others

Through the questionnaire I was concerned to explore a way of evaluating levels of involvement that did not require direct admission of bullying, but asked respondents to consider the perceptions of others. Few children at Nicholas Street School appeared to derive enjoyment from the persecution of others (Rigby, 1996), although many were prepared to admit that others might see their actions as bullying (Table 9).

Table 9: Pupils' responses admitting to being perceived by others as a bully derived from questionnaire <i>(total population and by classes)</i>											
<i>Question: Are there any pupils in the class, or in the school, who would say that you have bullied or teased them in a nasty way? (please tick a box)</i>											
Value Label		ALL		5L		5H		6Y		6J	
		<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>
Yes		52	52.5	15	46.9	6	35.3	9	40.9	22	78.6
No		47	47.5	17	53.1	11	64.7	13	59.1	6	21.4
	Total	99	100	32	100	17	100	22	100	28	100
		<i>Missing cases 5</i>									

The resulting figures are more than four times higher than the 12% who admitted to bullying 'at least sometimes' in the Sheffield survey (DfE, 1994, p.25). It suggested that:

- a) either Nicholas Street had a major bullying problem;
- b) or that my acquaintance with the classes meant that pupils felt able to admit to bullying;
- c) or that measuring involvement by asking children to adopt the victim's perspective led to higher reported levels;
- d) or the inclusion of the phrase 'nasty teasing' in the opening question on definition had generated a broader concept on bullying for respondents.

I am convinced that a) was unlikely, based on observation and responses in interviews, and would like to have thought that I was trusted sufficiently for b) to have had a limited impact. Therefore it is c) and d) that appear to be the more credible and it suggests that incidence levels may be as much a reflection on methodological matters as they are measures of involvement in bullying.

In his review of research into bullying in Scandinavian schools, Olweus (1993) sought to compare a variety of research, concluding that problems in data gathering techniques, such as inexperienced researchers, small samples and a lack of clarity about definition, had led to questionable statistics. In seeking comparisons between levels of bullying in the 1970s and the 1980s/early 1990s Olweus (1993, p.17) proposed that there were *'indirect signs ... that bullying both takes more serious forms and is more prevalent nowadays than 10-15 years ago.'* His reference to prevalence may be linked to usage of the word 'bullying' more openly by pupils and employing it to embrace broader selections of actions than had been the case previously. Diverse notions of bullying, including social exclusion and negative forms of teasing, may have contributed to increased reported levels, especially if pupils' understanding extends to embrace what Swain (1998, p.362) has summarised as *'anything that someone does that is nasty and hurts me.'* The problem may not be one of increasing forms of seriousness, nor increasing levels, but a more capacious deployment of the term 'bullying'.

In interviews I used many forms of question to open up the subject of involvement as a perpetrator. The choice of question was determined by my relationship with the interviewee, the atmosphere of the interview and the knowledge possessed from my time spent in their

classrooms. One approach was broad, *'is there any bullying in the class or year group?'* which demanded reflection upon relationships and actions and then lead to the more direct, *'have you been involved in bullying or picking on anyone?'* Another way of asking about involvement as bullies replicated the questionnaire version *'do you think any other children would say you have bullied them for anything that you have done?'* which invited pupils to contemplate the perspective of others. For example:

Wendy (5Y): *I don't know. Olivia would because I'm being friends with Vanessa and she doesn't like that.*

Where children were asked about behaviours considered hurtful it was often natural to move onto *'have you ever done anything like that?'* The variety of questions resulted from what I felt were my developing skills as an interviewer and realisation that subtle changes in the question led to differing forms of engagement and answers. In all cases the aim was to ask the question when the interviewee was used to the process and could see that I was neither judgmental, outraged nor condoning of their confessing to having 'picked on' others.

Throughout pupil interviews admission to bullying produced responses that I have categorised (Appendix 19). However, there seemed to be a greater reluctance to being involved as a perpetrator and here my presence could have made disclosing involvement difficult. Only 2 children out of the 104 interviewed conveyed any sense of gratification or pleasure from bullying. Occasionally the reaction from their 'victim' was not the acquiescence associated with classical notions of victim typology, but a preparedness to respond aggressively. Lorraine and the other case studies, Edward and Kevin, mentioned later, were to illustrate how

such pupils might even contribute to their being bullied, deriving attention and even status and power from it.

In tabulating interview data I have adopted a practice of not listing every response because they were similar or exactly the same, but what is presented is representative of the answers given. A continuum was evident with denial, often accompanied with outrage, at one end and divulgence of having bullied at the other. In many cases admission to negative acts was supported by the reasoning behind them as well as an occasional concern that I should see the informant as neither vindictive nor totally responsible.

‘Confessors’ occasionally amplified their responses with recognition of potential hurt caused or an indication of a ‘pay off’ that they experienced.

Belinda (6J): *There is someone called Robin. When you start teasing him and everything he goes off in a huff. It is really funny.*

‘Justifiers’ sought to legitimise their actions by offering reasoning behind it, often shifting responsibility to the other party with comment such as *‘I only do it if they keep picking on me’* (Liam 5H). ‘Unintentionals’ reported that they had not meant to bully, thus denying a key feature of bullying that of intent.

Max (5H): *Matthew and Liam because they like take everything personally... like I don't really mean it.*

Qualifying statements, following admission, invariably implied that their actions were little more than retaliatory or accidental and they had turned out to be more serious than was meant,

similar to Rigby's 'Mindless' bullying (Table 1; p.25). Max's comment above is an example of divisions between 'Justifiers' and 'Unintentionals' not always being clear.

Another group was either 'Unsure' or diffident about confessing to involvement and came across as being 'Defensive'. They demonstrated an unwillingness to take the subject further or lacked clarity of definition, offering statements such as 'don't know' or 'can't remember'. Their responses were often terse or avoidant, occasionally reinforcing what I perceived as reluctance for further pursuit of the subject.

Victoria (5H): *Probably some people ... I don't really want to say.*

Being interviewed by a familiar adult sometimes appeared to counter inhibitions or conversely, with the 'Unsure' group, there appeared to be an obvious reluctance to mention their involvement or those who were involved.

Finally there were those who rejected any involvement. These were the pupils for whom a denial was deemed sufficient or there was embellishment with a note of moral indignation such as '*no, never, I don't like bullying*' (Martin 6J).

Admitting to bullying proved to be more than a confession of involvement or otherwise. Children considered motives behind their actions and examined whether any hurt caused had been deliberate from their perspective. Admission also depended upon methodological matters such as the research instrument, the framing of the question and the nature of the research. Reluctance to admit may be more than a willingness not to found out. It may be a

consequence of the interpretation of respondents and the skills of those who seek information about their involvement.

4:3(ii) On being bullied

The terms ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ have been used extensively in the literature to describe those involved and I have mentioned the subdivisions that have been developed within each category in Chapter 2. I have also drawn attention to the way that pupils reflecting on experiences portrayed a complex picture of reasoning and accounting for actions, often accompanied by honesty and willingness to talk. Questionnaire responses revealed that more pupils reported being bullied or teased in nasty way than admitted bullying (Tables 9 and 10), which could have been another methodological matter with anonymous questionnaires posing little threat and no requirement for further action. Once again there appeared to be very high levels of incidence and the inclusion of ‘nasty teasing’ may also have contributed to this.

Table 10: Pupils’ responses admitting to being bullied derived from questionnaires (total population and by classes)

<i>Question: Are there any pupils in the class, or in the school, who you would say teased you in a nasty way or bullied you? (please tick a box)</i>											
Value Label		ALL		5L		5H		6Y		6J	
		<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>
Yes		76	76.8	26	76.5	14	77.8	14	63.6	22	88.0
No		23	23	8	23.5	4	22.2	8	36.4	3	12.0
	Total	99	100	34	100	18	100	22	100	25	100
		<i>Missing cases 5</i>									

Turning to interviews, the term 'victim' carries emotionally disempowering overtones and was never used in any discussions with pupils. Eliciting pupils' experiences demanded taking opportunities to develop recollection of occasions when they had been 'picked on' and then asking whether the word 'bullying' applied to their experience. Sometimes, fortunately rarely, pupils did not elaborate on their responses and I became aware that to pursue matters further would be inappropriate and to do potential damage to what might be fragile self-esteem was to be avoided at all costs.

The outcome of the interviews suggested that distinct, clearly defined groups might not present the full picture. There is no similar continuum to that established from the responses of bullies that could be constructed from those of victims. Their responses fell into three forms (Appendix 20):

- the negative;
- the unsure, which usually, on further deliberation converted to the negative, although occasionally the reflection prompted recall of an event that merited mention;
- those who perceived that they had been bullied.

Most reported bullying came from within the class, or, if not, from the year group and any bullying relationships that existed in the previous year had played a part in informing the constitution of Year 6 class groups by the staff in 1994. The high reported levels and the continued involvement of key characters, such as Lorraine and Julie, indicated that attempts

by the staff to engineer class configurations that eliminated the negative relationships of the previous year had not been totally successful.

Typologies of groups involved in bullying include the ‘bully/victim’ as a distinct group (Bowers et al., 1994). Analysis of questionnaires revealed a significant correlation between admitting to bullying and to being bullied (Table 11) indicating that either:

- pupils were likely to be involved as bullies if they were bullied (or vice versa) or;
- they were more prepared to *admit* to involvement as bullies, if they were also prepared to *admit* being victims (or vice versa) or;
- there were large numbers of ‘bully/victims’.

Table 11: Correlation between admitting to bullying and being bullied

Question	<i>Q2a): Are there any pupils in the class who you would say teased you in a nasty way or bullied you?</i>	
<i>Q3a): Are there any pupils in the class who you would say that you have bullied or teased in a nasty way?</i>	Pearson Correlation	.291
	Significance	.004
	N	102

I am not denying the existence of the ‘bully/victim’ as a sub-group, but would suggest that it may well be that they are the more extreme end of a continuum that might be described better as the ‘immediately involved’.

4:3(iii) Bullying amongst pupils in the Upper School

All forms of data from pupils confirmed that experiences varied somewhat between the classes and that factors such as teacher attitude and composition of groups and classes may have influenced both the nature and level of bullying. Very early in the data gathering process it was possible to identify a group of pupils who were central characters in the negative interactions in the classes. In a very limited number of cases being bullied seemed to almost define their relationships with others and the case studies presented in this thesis testify to such involvement. What also emerged from each class questionnaire was that many pupils were knowledgeable about bullying between classmates (Table 12) and they were prepared to use this medium to convey that knowledge.

Table 12: Pupils' responses admitting to seeing bullying: derived from questionnaires. <i>(total population and by classes)</i>											
<i>Question: Have you ever seen anything in this school that you would call bullying or nasty teasing, even though you were not involved? (please tick a box)</i>											
Value Label		ALL		5L		5H		6Y		6J	
		<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Raw score</i>	<i>Valid %</i>
Yes		88	85.4	29	87.9	11	61.1	23	95.8	25	89.3
No		15	14.6	4	12.1	7	38.9	1	4.2	3	10.7
	Total	103	100	33	100	18	100	24	100	28	100
		<i>Missing cases 1</i>									

The questionnaire invited pupils to attribute motives for bullying that had been observed either in class or in school and produced a diversity of opinions of reasons (Appendix 21). The most common responses were those which focused on the power that perceived perpetrators gleaned from their actions, either in the form of a 'payoff' (618), including that of 'fun' (605), or as an

exhibition of their supremacy (508). An almost equally prevalent reply was that children who bullied were merely reciprocating the negative actions of others (501), indicating that children concentrated on the behaviour, not the deliberation behind it, and that the reactivity of revenge could be bullying. Two other answers concentrated on the directly involved, with a small group locating the reason for bullying with negative feelings about victims (524) and a similar sized group perceiving that bullies possessed an intrinsic nastiness or evil (513).

Because they want to get attention (618).

Because they think they are strong so they show off and act cool. (508).

Just for fun (605).

Because they are nasty people or they enjoy doing it (513)

Because they do not like that person (524).

A further question explored whether pupils knew of bullying or nasty teasing in their class and the reason why the child was selected. It produced reasons that focussed mainly on the physical (626), the disposition of the victim (644), their learning difficulties (648) or that it could be justified as revenge for their previous actions (526) or their personality (532) (Appendix 22). Both forms of data gathering demonstrated how pupils perceived the characteristics that rendered their fellow pupils vulnerable and even, in some cases, offered them as justification. My knowledge of the pupils meant that it was often transparent to whom reference was being made, even though no names were requested, and that there were central characters for whom life at school was far from pleasant. They are amongst the case studies that follow.

Because she is skinny (626)

Because he gets in a big stress (644)

.... because she can't read well (648)

.... she all so dobs on people (526)

Because she is bossy (532)

Even before interview responses from the Year 5 were tabulated (Appendices 23 and 24) it was clear to me that from each class there was one central character. From 5H Kevin provided the focus for much of the discussion with pupils. His case was not straightforward, generating insights into the complexity of the assignation of labels such as 'bully' and their subdivisions. A diminutive, immature boy, who suffered with an extensive skin complaint, Kevin gave those who sought to tease a visible focal point and the opportunity to assert their power. He exuded anything but the charisma associated with stereotypes of bullies and, to some extent, his selection by his colleagues as *the main* protagonist came as something of a surprise to me. But it was a combination of bullying and violent reactivity that pupils recalled when they discussed Kevin. Indeed, it was because of the vitriolic nature of his reactions that several pupils perceived him as a bully, although they indicated that his behaviour was rarely premeditated.

He was nominated as a bully, as a victim of bullying and, for six pupils, he was both. There were also a number of disapproving comments about Kevin's aggression, many from girls, and some incorporated the term 'teasing', perhaps in an attempt to downgrade seriousness.

Jessica: *There is this boy called Kevin, he always calls me titch and it annoys me.*

Melanie: *He gets in moods so he kicks people and he cries after.*

Denise: *He picks on other children and people pick on him.*

Janet: *It's not exactly bullying, he is just teasing.*

It was not a sense of power that others saw in him but an unpredictability that led to feelings of unease, for there appeared little calculated intent in his actions, just an unstable, erratic response to others. Perhaps Kevin was close to the 'provocative victim' (Olweus, 1978; Stephenson and Smith, 1989) in that he was, as Batsche and Knoff (1994, p.167) describe, 'hot-tempered, restless, and anxious and ... will attempt to retaliate when attacked.' However, to his classmates he was the bully, despite the fact that many appeared to exploit his disposition and then justify their actions as merely responding to him. Extreme physical reaction, which lacked control, provoked or otherwise, often constituted bullying for these pupils and he joined Matthew and Lee as being deemed the main perpetrators.

One of the few admissions to bullying Kevin came from Paul who, like his victim, possessed a distinctive physical attribute that made him noticeable (*not included as it would be an identifier*), even unique, in this school population but it had not led to him being victimised.

Paul: *Well some people bully him but when they do he gets in mega stresses.*

CL: *Have you ever bullied Kevin?*

Paul: *If I'm honest, yeah, sometimes*

Paul had been a key pupil in the 'getting in' phase as we had developed a good relationship during breaktimes. What had started with reviews of football results and commentary on the previous night's television programmes, moved on to become a form of friendship and Paul became a key 'gatekeeper' into the culture. His reference to 'mega stresses' emphasised Kevin's lack of coping strategies, but it was difficult to distinguish whether they lead to the pupil being victimised or whether they were a consequence of that victimisation (Bijttebier and Vertommen, 1998).

Lee, when asked whether anyone might consider any of his actions as bullying elected to talk of Kevin, as one who '*might*' perceive him as part of an aggressive group. '*Well when we like we get him like, and we started it, he like thinks that we bully him*'. Following meandering detail, he provided a chance to revisit the idea that what Lee had done could be called 'bullying' and the '*kind of yeah*' reply was a reluctant admission.

Kevin himself tested my skills as an interviewer. Initially he appeared at ease and prepared to talk about his relationships, but his responses were staccato. After a discussion on friendships and naming his friends, Ross and Liam, he speedily moved on to the negative aspects of his social life in school. He said that he had often been bullied and that Matthew and Lee were the perpetrators. I asked him what they did and he replied that he was laughed at and called names relating to his skin complaint.

CL: *Do you think they mean to be nasty to you?*

Kevin: *Probably yeah*

CL: *And does it hurt you and upset you?*

Kevin: *Ummmm.*

He continued by talking about having reported matters to Mr Hogan, who reprimanded the accused and gave them extra work. He recalled that his parents had been to talk to Mr Benjamin who had censured the two boys, since which, not only had the bullying stopped, but also they were being *'nice to me now'*. Throughout our conversations Kevin created an impression that his friendships with peers, with the two exceptions, were mainly positive and that I should not dwell on the subject. Admission to involvement as perpetrators, never likely to be easy for some pupils, proved very difficult for the case studies, despite, perhaps because of, my role in the school.

Aside from recounting the experiences of Kevin, there was an occasional natural reluctance for children to declare as a bully or to name others. Victoria, when asked if others might consider her as having bullied, felt that *'probably some people ... I don't really want to say'*, and she added that it was located mainly within the girls in her group. Her reticence was respected, but such caution was not needed with Max who believed that Matthew and Liam might select him as a bully, which they were not to do. Knowing that I had talked with, or would be talking with, other pupils might have influenced his answer. He proceeded to offer justification in that they took matters too *'personally and like I don't really mean it but like they just get on my nerves sometime.'*

A group of girls were selected by others and by themselves as often breaking friendships and 'picking on' each other. It was not easy to ascribe specific roles such as bully to any

individual in this group, and, although some felt that 'bullying' did not best describe negative interactions within the group, their relationships were mentioned by many in the class. Georgia, Kirsty, Ellen and Victoria were regularly involved and the latter emerged as the more vulnerable member of the group.

The words 'teasing' and 'bullying' were often used interchangeably particularly when describing the experiences of Victoria, but when asked whether the term bullying applied to interactions between the group of girls to which Victoria belonged, reflection left Jamie with doubts:

CL: *Is what they do to each other bullying?*

Jamie: *Not mostly, sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't, it's just like ...they like tell on each other a lot like and 'wordscrap'*

CL: *What is a 'wordscrap'?*

Jamie: *Well we say like horrible names to each other and like tell on each other all the time.*

The evocative 'wordscrap' illustrated how often children considered only physical acts as bullying, yet the term implied violence in the interchanges and these were to provide the initial concern for the class teacher.

Asked who might be involved Mr Hogan paused then finally nominated several pupils about whom he had concerns, but surprisingly did not include the pivotal Kevin. The twin sisters, Ellen and Georgia, and their companions Pauline, Victoria, Adele and Kirsty were his first focus. *'It is a strange group and I can see them all in both roles. They will all be at one time*

the victim, but they will join in as persecutors at the same time' (Int 1). He related that they were manipulative and, despite the fact that when relationships within the group broke down anyone might suffer, it was usually at the expense of Victoria. He added that there was *'a lot of bitching in that group, very volatile, very quick to take offence, especially Victoria ... she tends to be more isolated than the others.'* He continued by describing how she had been accused of theft by her peers, with her feeling *'absolutely distraught'* and how he knew that she had been *'set up'* (Appendix 25). His comment that when a supply teacher had taken the class behaviour deteriorated prompted my thoughts of a link between classroom bullying and consistency of management and classroom climate. For Mr Hogan, these negative actions constituted bullying and were uppermost in his mind, which contrasted with certain pupils who possessed doubts about it being serious enough to qualify as bullying. Here was the group of pupils that caused him the greatest inconvenience and this might be an important criterion that teachers invoked in labelling actions as bullying.

Amongst the boys Lee was his principal *'question mark'* and although *'more a perpetrator than a victim so saying, if there is a problem, it is not a striking one.'* Ross, never mentioned by his peers, was thought of as manipulative and *'orchestrating his good friends to certainly liven things up'* (Int 1). The first interview ended without mention of Kevin, and I did not pursue the omission. He had been paramount in selections made by pupils, was a conspicuous pupil in many ways and first choice from this outsider's perspective. Eventually, during the second interview, I felt compelled to introduce Kevin into the conversation and Mr Hogan saw him as a victim who attracted the attention of others (Int 2). He expressed no surprise in hearing that the children saw Kevin as the central figure, gave an impression of

inevitability about Kevin's experience and that it was an assumed part of his life. He had been dismissive of Kevin's experiences and his approach intimated that, either he had become so used to certain pupils being involved in bullying that there was acceptance of it, or that Kevin, unlike the group of girls, did little to disturb him and therefore was of less concern. He had even named key personnel from the neighbouring class, '*obvious victim, Edward*' (Int 2), prior to any mention of Kevin and amongst his foremost choices was Edward, with whom, ironically, there were parallels with Kevin.

From the parallel class, 5Y, I had been aware from my time with the class that Edward was likely to be the most prominent nomination as being 'picked on', but it was not until the analysis stage that the degree of his involvement became evident (Appendix 24). According to his peers what had led him to endure negative attention from others within the class was varied, but their responses could be categorised into three broad areas; background; appearance and reaction to others (Appendix 26). His peers exploited features of his background, such as being an only child, living with his mother, no father in residence, and his reaction when these matters were raised with him. Edward was also physically distinctive. Like Kevin he suffered from a skin complaint which, when added to his being overweight, meant that there were sufficient physical attributes for others to focus upon. He also was unkempt, presenting the image of not being able to look after himself or caring about how he appeared.

According to Mr Yates, Edward was from a poorer home than many of his contemporaries and one of the weaker pupils academically. He added that he was quick to anger, responded

physically and sought to gain attention either positively or negatively. On one occasion Mr Yates initiated a classroom discussion (23/11/95) and pupils gathered in what might loosely be described as a circle. Edward sat under a table away from the others, with no one commenting and considering his behaviour strange. He lacked Lorraine's apparent self-confidence and academic prowess, but possessed Kevin's capacity to retaliate aggressively when required. He was not alone in being overweight and having learning difficulties, yet no one else appeared to possess what Mynard and Joseph (1997, p.54) describe as low 'natural status', which was, in his case, coupled with a desire to assert himself. He was a reminder of a key phrase, being 'picked on', that I found used liberally by the pupils, implying a selection process that isolates (Cullingford, 1993). He fulfilled the criteria that determined who will be selected for bullying proposed by Whitney et al. (1992) and echoed by others (Mooney and Smith, 1995, Sharp, 1996b). He was at greater risk of being bullied in that he:

- possessed characteristics that distinguished him, physically and attitudinally, from others;
- was less socially integrated and therefore did not benefit from the protection a group can provide;
- responded aggressively and therefore may have provoked others to bully him.

Edward rejected my request to tape the interview but permitted my writing notes. He conveyed initial enthusiasm for our interview, which lasted about 30 minutes, after which he became restless and eventually accepted my offer to conclude matters. We were never to engage again formally as part of the data collection.

Conveying an air of resignation, he painted a picture of isolation from almost the entire school community. He spoke of not getting on well with others and I asked whether he felt ‘picked on’.

Edward: *Yes a lot. Hell of a lot ... people like Peter and Keith keep calling me nasty names.*

He gave an example of ‘nasty names’ and then continued by saying that his friends intervened on his behalf, telling the bullies to leave him alone. Probing the identity of his friends revealed a girl from the Infant section of the school, Abi, but no one from his own age group was named. We then explored his experiences of bullying.

CL: *Would others think of you as a bully?*

Edward: *Yes, Ron and Raymond keep saying I’m a bully.*

CL: *Why’s that?*

Edward: *Because they bully me and get uptight about it and I get vicious.*

CL: *Have you been in trouble recently?*

Edward: *Yes, for something I didn’t do. I was playing on the apparatus. Raymond got in the way. I was going along and accidentally kicked him in the head and got sent to Mr Benjamin’s office. He told me I would get in a lot of trouble if I did it again.*

Despite his perception of self, Edward was not to be named as a bully by his peers, unlike Kevin and he emerged as the most powerless pupil from the four classes. He stated that his action had been unintentional and then revealed that even very young pupils were not kind to him and ‘dinner ladies’ did little about him being bullied at lunchtimes. His final comment

destroyed my attempt to broaden the discussion to others who might be experiencing bullying. *‘Just me, I’m the one that gets bullied. It’s probably because they don’t like me. I’ve hardly got any friends in school.’*

Interviews with his peers revealed little indignity or outrage about the victimisation that Edward endured, illustrated by Jackie’s casual recounting that:

Jackie: *Today in the library he (Tony) said to Edward, ‘You have to say yes to this question or I’ll punch your face in after school.’ ‘Alright I’ll say yes’, he goes. ‘Are you thick?’ or something like that and he goes ‘No’ and Tony came up and jumped on him.’*

This incident demanded that I verified that a member of staff had known of the threat.

In the opinion of some, Edward’s demeanour meant that he almost invited negative attention and it was understandable that he was selected. Just as reasons could be found for picking on Kevin in 5H, so Edward’s characteristics were offered as justification for his selection.

Derek: *Well some friends of mine go round picking on him. They call him names like ‘xxxx’ (withheld as identifier). Cos they think it’s funny ...he goes off crying.*

Sharon: *I think cos it’s where he comes from, where he lives, I don’t know why but people just don’t like him I think he smells and things like that ... sometimes I’m a bit horrible to him but we all are ... it’s just a joke.*

His story illustrates that particular pupils, fortunately few in number, experience so much bullying that it becomes accepted, institutionalized even, at times, condoned by the social network of the class and, in this case, re-enforced by the attitude of the teacher. A number of children selected Edward, with few endearing tones evident when they spoke about him and he aroused little in the way of support or affection. Terms such as 'kid' and 'joke' were used as justification for actions against him, with an implied humour and lightness that Edward himself did not perceive nor share. As with Kevin there appeared to be a cyclical element in that he was selected for bullying because of physical or emotional attributes and, consequently, had developed such reactions as telling the teacher which, in turn, attracted more negative attention.

The cases of Edward and Kevin led me to challenge two common features associated with bullying. First, that it is a playground phenomenon. Many of the 'being bullied' experiences of Edward and Kevin took place in places other than the playground and at times other than recreation times. They stemmed from relationships that were part of everyday experience *in* and out the classroom. The second feature, the assumed covert nature of bullying (Besag, 1997), is also worthy of question. The bullying experiences of Edward, and to a lesser extent Kevin, were manifest and the willingness of many pupils to talk about them affirmed that bullying was blatant, visible and in Edward's case almost tangible. What was reported by these pupils raised questions about whether what Edward went through was seen as less of a bullying experience because it lacked a secretive element and appeared to be symptomatic of the way pupils openly interacted with him. When asked who picks on Edward, Lindsey replied:

Lindsey: *Most of them do*

CL: *When you say 'most of them' do you mean most of the boys or girls?*

Lindsey: *Probably girls I would say*

CL: *Why does Edward get it?*

Lindsey: *I don't know because like he always, when the kids are on the carpet, he like sneaks up on to the chair when the teacher is not looking and we go 'Edward has done something' and he says he didn't do it and they go 'Edward you did.'*

Edward himself had not identified any girl as bullying him, nor had he mentioned the incident with Tony. The threatening nature of the latter, a short, wiry character, who confessed that he might be seen by others as a bully 'sometimes', was drawn to my attention by several classmates. Keith, Derek, Tony and Olivia were amongst those nominated as perpetrators by their peers and this was accompanied by differentiation of the forms of bullying noted by the pupils. For example, Tony was associated with physical violence which contrasted with the 'shouts and lies' of Olivia. Derek was also perceived to be one of the victimised, but no one matched Edward as the outstanding choice in this area.

But from my own observations and evidence of conversations, being 'picked on' was such a dominant feature of Edward's classroom and school life that he was the anticipated immediate choice of his teacher. However, Mr Yates, following the pattern determined by his colleague, made no mention of him and selected others that might fit the label. His first nomination was Olivia, a pupil with learning difficulties, whom he felt was vulnerable, yet possessed the potential to turn '*quite nasty and spiteful*' (Int 1). I asked whether this was a response to

received teasing and he felt that the way that groups systematically gathered together to 'pick on' others meant that the term bullying was applicable. He used the interview as an instrument for reflection, notably when he referred back to his definition of bullying as providing a basis for his selections.

Mr Yates also expressed surprise that certain pupils were not bullied and in doing so suggested that factors, such as size, homophobia and colour, were pre-determinants to being subjected to bullying.

Mr Yates: *I'm often surprised at the children who are not, like Kay who is black ... and large as well. I have never heard anybody say anything to her or act towards her that would suggest that there was anything there. Jack, who is possibly gay, certainly has strange sort of mannerisms. Billy as well. I have always thought the boys, the lads would sort of see them as very strange creatures ... it puzzles me that there is no clash (Int 1).*

This thoughtful member of staff continued with a perception that pupils employed sexual or racial stereotypes in selecting victims and this may have been the case. Certainly particular groups appeared to influence his choices. Indeed his work in 'circle times' often sought to counter culturally unacceptable prejudice and may have been successful. Edward's ragged appearance, poor co-ordination and reactive nature were factors that may have influenced his being bullied, but, because they generated little outrage, they were more difficult than factors such as race to address openly.

Mr Yates apparent assurance in his initial nominations was not sustained as he mentioned Ron, whose parents had complained about the influence that Raymond had over him. He was beginning to consider this as bullying, based upon his own inability to *'penetrate into the group to find out what is going on'* (Int 1). Edward had selected both Ron and Raymond as bullies. The furtive nature of events surrounding these two boys and the self-questioning style of Mr Yates provided an opportunity to offer new selections.

Mr Yates: *Now Edward is definitely a victim. He could wear a placard with that on and it wouldn't tell the children anything that they didn't know.* (Int 1)

He described how a new pupil to the school, Colin, had selected Edward *'as someone he could victimise'* (Int 1), implying he possessed such a transparent vulnerability. Although the relationship between the two pupils was now more positive, these thoughts led Mr Yates to reflect on Edward's situation. He added that confinement to a single label was problematic as he declared that Edward could be both a victim and a bully, a view that contradicted evidence from pupil interviews (Appendix 24). He elaborated by suggesting that Edward was a contributor to his situation and that his manipulative behaviour might be considered a form of bullying. His statement that some of his *'behaviours could be interpreted as bullying towards the other children'* (Int 1) was based on the way that Edward demanded to be treated as a special case and that, to this end, he could be manipulative, even ensuring that *'teachers run around in circles to accommodate him'* (Int 1). Once again the impact that the pupil's experience had on the teacher proved to be a relevant factor. He became more dismissive in the second interview indicating that Edward's vulnerability was *'more of a game that he was playing.'*

Both key case studies from Year 5 had common features. Kevin and Edward were obvious choices, except for their teachers, as they were subject to a range of bullying experiences and were deemed by some to be perpetrators. They tested the distinct categories of ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ and their experiences were part of the everyday interactions of the pupils in their classes, being sufficiently open that, as mentioned previously, they tested the applicability of ‘bullying is a covert activity’ (Besag, 1997, p.41). Their experiences of bullying were institutionalised within their classroom and playground relationships and taken for granted by their teachers, who found their respective key involved pupils difficult to like and exhibited an understanding as to why others might select them. Edward and Kevin encountered few positive social experiences and little friendship, which meant that they were either tolerated at a distance or bullied.

Neither of the Year 6 classes reported on here through interviews completed questionnaires. However, from interviews and a limited number of re-interviews, several pupils reported that they and their classmates had been involved in bullying (Appendices 27 and 28). Much that these pupils experienced as bullying has been reported through the story of Lorraine (Section 4:1) and what follows are the significant remaining recollections.

Martin felt that the breaking of friends with John merited the term bullying: *‘when we break friends it gets a bit violent, yeah’* and for John *‘yeah we just get on, sometimes you break up a bit’* and he went on to reflect upon an incident in which Martin was part of a gang that had called him hurtful names. Here what determined that these two children saw bullying within

their relationship was the violence of the arguments between them, but neither seemed to dominate the other.

A triadic bullying situation with two 'picking on' one, existed between Debbie, Karen and Carly:

Debbie: *They both wanted to play with me at the same time but they'd fight if we played together. They were bullying me and bullying each other. They used to make me really upset. Things like tell all my friends not to like me and things like that.*

Karen did not relate such incidents, although she did talk about being teased by others in the class over her height, she did not perceive that her relationship with the other two could be construed as bullying or did not want me to see it as such. Carly's interpretation hinted at why Karen may have been reticent.

Carly: *Only like there's three of us, like me, Debbie and Karen. We always break up and Karen is sort of the main person and ... me and Debbie don't get on but me and Karen get on and Debbie and Karen get on, so we always have arguments and one of them always ends up in tears.*

CL: *One of them always ends up in tears, who is the one that's often left out?*

Carly: *Mostly Debbie ... but if Karen isn't there, me and Debbie get on, so see it's a bit awkward*

CL: *So when there's three of you, there can be problems?*

Carly: *One of us will try to make Karen feel more happier.*

Within the triangle Karen was experiencing less hurt or was least willing to talk about it. It was evident that she possessed an influence on the dynamics of the relationships, which may have contributed to her disinclination to see matters as bullying, although her colleagues classified what they endured as bullying.

Apart from the experiences of Edward in 5Y, little of what has been reported above matches the kinds of acute incidents reported by the media. However, for these pupils what they experienced led to feelings of being hurt and fell within their boundaries of what, for them, constituted bullying. Often the challenge for me had been asking pupils to try to see things from the perspective of others and the thoughtful Andrea proved to be an example of a pupil considering that what she did might be interpreted as bullying.

Andrea: *Yeah, probably, because if they are going to do something that they shouldn't do, I would say you shouldn't do ... sometimes I just think people want to think of me as a bully in that way. I'm not a bully but I think I'm more about stopping people doing what they shouldn't do.*

There were few relationships that seemed to be exclusively based on bullying, but several pupils were prepared to admit to having bullied occasionally. Children recalled events from their infant classes, but usually talked of recent events with admission usually being in the 'Justifier' category (Appendix 19). As with Year 5, reasons or excuses were offered for an aggressive act and there appeared to be a concern, that I should not see them as a bully or, at least, a bully without a motive.

Much of Ms James's consideration of her pupils revolved around Lorraine whose capacity to gain attention meant that she also dominated the discussion on pupils in the first interview. Asked about other pupils who concerned her, she mentioned Wasim whom she felt had been the subject of 'racial abuse' in Year 5.

Ms James: *I worry about Wasim because I think he feels he is a victim of racial abuse, which he is sometimes ... but he is almost like daring the children sometimes saying, go on then cos I know that if you call me these names I know the teacher really feels strongly about this. (Int 2)*

Where there had been open classroom discussion it had focused on racial name-calling. Ms James considered that Wasim continued to feel subjected to teasing but, like Lorraine, there was an element of gaining attention through it. The scarcity of non-white pupils in the school may well have contributed to an increased awareness of racial comments. The blurring of racism and bullying meant that disentangling them was highly problematic here. She continued by recalling that, in the previous year, she had taught two pupils who:

Ms James: *.... would want to call somebody the names to annoy them most. That's what they enjoyed doing, they wanted to hurt people and they wanted to make people angry and they didn't really care about the consequences ... there was bullying going on then. (Int 2)*

The surety of that last clause, '*there was bullying going on then*', emphasised her disinclination to use the term 'bullying' without deliberation. Wasim himself had spoken of Gordon, also mentioned by Ms James, and how his taunting had angered him. What Ms James was experiencing with her current class was less explicit and less physical and,

therefore, seemingly more removed from her understanding of bullying. In contrast most of her class embraced a broader concept of bullying, including social and emotional aspects, highlighting the significance of sharing definitions at classroom level.

The impression created by analysis of transcripts of class 6A was that this was a class in which hurtful name-calling and social exclusion occurred, but there were no pivotal characters like those in Year 5. The main concern for the pupils was Julie, with her capacity to tease others with intent to hurt and this kind of behaviour was central to her relationship with Robin that emerged as vitriolic and led to an incident described below. Lively and eloquent in class, Julie resorted to monosyllabic responses in the interview. Her knowledge of prior interviews with her peers may have affected her willingness to match the openness that others were prepared to adopt especially Robin, whose description of what happened between them led to his self selection as both bully and bullied. Following a period of teasing about and minor damage to a piece of Robin's artwork, he lost his temper and punched Julie. Ms Alexander sent him from the class and castigated him by calling him 'a bully' (11/11/94). The chance for an informal discussion a week later with Robin revealed that he was still aggrieved because, to him, being labelled a bully had been unjust and in the subsequent interview, the event continued to dominate:

Robin: *I didn't mind being sent out of the classroom. I had lost my temper and I needed to cool down a bit, but I was not a bully ... I just got in a temper because she was getting on my nerves. (18/11/94)*

Robin *She was really, really, really getting on my nerves, like walking up and punching me and all that kicking me, generally ganging up on me ... about my clothes and my hair and then I just took out on her and punched her. (Int 2)*

He acknowledged reacting inappropriately but felt that the premeditation had come from Julie and therefore his action was justified. A further mention of Julie came from Kathy who spoke of the name-calling, damage to property and, what she felt was the most hurtful of all, coming between her and her friend Andrea from 6J.

Lack of an obvious candidate may have contributed to the pensive Ms Alexander's difficulty in consigning a pupil to a specific category. Her deliberations on likely participants in bullying were preceded with a confession that she did not relish the task. Initially she cited Miles who had reported feeling bullied by the diminutive Garry, whom she felt was fairly indiscriminate at *'dishing it out'* (Int 1). Garry himself had reported to me that he felt bullied by others who he declined to name. The simple 'bully' or 'victim' model did not appear to apply in this case, nor did it in the case of Robin, who seemed to invite negative attention.

Ms Alexander: *Robin ... is a very interesting character because he perceives himself as very, very bullied and almost seems to invite it, consciously or otherwise but here's an interesting background because he had his hair in a plat with beads upon it and people were teasing him about it. ...He decided that he shouldn't be teased for something which was different. ... and he wasn't going to give way to this behaviour and he was going to stick it out. I quite admired that. (Int 1)*

Robin's hair was different from his peers, both in length and style, and he conveyed a difference that might attract attention from others. He was certainly a pupil who celebrated being different but, unlike Edward and Kevin, there was a resilience, which occasionally faltered and proved fragile, but was usually coupled with a capacity to be aggressive to others. That which rendered Robin different was a fashion statement of his own choice, whereas

much that was distinctive about Edward were matters over which he had no control and little capacity to change.

The event for which Ms Alexander was to label Robin ‘bully’ occurred after my interview with her which had highlighted the value of the medium as a reflective tool because when she returned to Robin she concluded that:

Ms Alexander: *There’s quite a lot coming back to me as I am talking actually. I’ll go back to Robin because he does actually behave (unheard) often swiping people with exercise books, barging into them. Quite disruptive, you know, the children are sitting down on the carpet and he’ll be kicking somebody in the back. (Int 1)*

Following what felt to me like a confession that the boys in the class demanded a disproportionate amount of her attention, she moved on to consider the girls. She felt that Jenny was the recipient of insensitive comments from Kerry that amounted to exclusion.

Ms Alexander: *So we’ve had the situation where she’s said unpleasant things about Jenny, like she doesn’t have to be on our table does she, why’s she have to be in our class? (Int 1).*

The pupils confirmed this as Jenny had mentioned that Kerry had called her unpleasant names. It provided evidence that teachers were perceptive in their choices, but not always in the most obvious ones, and throughout her discussion of involved children it had been pupils that were classroom management problems that had been paramount rather than those whose interactions matched her given definition. Her final choice of Julie as a perpetrator was almost

an afterthought with Ms Alexander stating that she was surreptitious '*so that it is not obvious in the classroom situation*' (Int 1).

After careful consideration Ms Alexander had demonstrated a keen awareness of those involved. Indeed, all four teachers were aware of bullying behaviours, usually within their classes and, in the main, they were confident about their capacity to identify participants. They were less sanguine about initially attributing categories such 'bully' and 'victim' to pupils based more on reluctance to employ pejorative labels than an inability to identify involvement and only Mr Yates openly drew upon a definition to focus his thinking about those involved.

The research revealed that many pupils were or had been involved in what they would term 'bullying'. For Edward and Kevin it was an everyday feature and an integral part of lives at school, to the extent that teachers and pupils almost accepted it as the norm and even seemed to see no need to bring about change. For other pupils there were occasional actions, even relationships, which merited being considered as bullying and these were often known to their teacher.

Questionnaires that require pupils to match their experiences with lists of behaviours that have been experienced in school (Arora, 1994) say little about the qualitative experience of a pupil like Edward, for whom bullying was a part of everyday life at school. There has been an advocacy of employing incidence levels as a means of assessing the size of the bullying problem (DfE, 1994, p.35) and evaluating the impact of an intervention. The stories of these

children and their teachers highlight the problematic aspects of this form of data. In a previous study I asked pupils 'have you been bullied this term?' (Lee, 1993). The answer of Edward would have been the same as Billy and Jack, but this would have said nothing about the nature of their experience and the impact that it was having on their lives.

The following table (Table 13) provides a summative analysis of the four teachers of the focus classes.

Table 13: The four teachers on their pupils				
	<i>Mr Hogan</i>	<i>Mr Yates</i>	<i>Ms Alexander</i>	<i>Ms James</i>
Selection of pupils	Did not select pupils easily for his own class but did so for the class of Mr Yates.	Selected pupils easily.	Selected pupils with some ease, especially from the boys and despite feeling that it would not be easy.	Selected pupils without having to dwell on the process of making a choice.
Use of terms such as 'bully' and 'victim'	Did not use the terms freely. Used 'perpetuator' or 'they'll orchestrate victimisation' instead of 'bully'.	Used the terms quite openly and without reservation.	Used the terms openly.	Used the terms openly, but with some initial reluctance.
Categorising pupils as victims and bullies	Found placing pupils in 'bully' or 'victim' categories difficult.	Found placing pupils in 'bully' or 'victim' categories difficult.	Appeared to have no difficulty in categorising until returning to a discussion about one pupil in the second interview.	Found placing pupils in 'bully' or 'victim' categories difficult.
Reference to definition of bullying	Did not refer to his definition beyond offering it when required at the outset.	Employed his definition to help determine the context.	Did not refer to her definition beyond offering it when required at the outset.	Did not refer to her definition but clearly had a fairly narrow view.

4:3(iv) **The Remaining Staff**

As the main focus of experiences of bullying was on the Upper School this section is a distilled report on the main findings from extensive data that arose as the remaining staff considered bullying in the context of their pupils.

Mrs Saunders felt that intention to hurt was not always present with her four and five year olds but she felt there was a form of social experimentation accounted for with the phrase *'I'm going to try this'* (Int 1). Her colleague, Mrs Fashin, initially declared doubts that younger pupils were able to *'understand how their victims feel'* (Int 1), but revised her view, adding that she felt that children would be able to empathise with their peers and would be responsive to questions such as *'have you thought what it would be like if someone did that to you?'* (Int 2). She selected a quiet, sensitive pupil as a potential victim about whom *'other children identify something ... which is slightly different'*, reminding me of Pikas's phrase (1993, p.1), *'doesn't move in the same direction as other people.'*

There was a feeling that much of what might be considered as bullying in older pupils was part of normal maturational experience of younger children and this idea informed teachers' increased unwillingness to ascribe labels such as 'bully' and 'victim' to their pupils. Mrs Richards, who had constantly modified and cultivated her views on definition, made a strident denouncement of labels, advocating that the behaviour should receive the label not the child (Int 2). Similarly Mrs Fashin was not *'absolutely convinced'* (Int 1) about terminology and looked to words such as 'aggressor' and 'intimidator, as having more meaning than bullying.

If labelling pupils as ‘bullies’ or ‘victims’ was to prove disconcerting for the staff, using the term ‘bullying’ was proving less problematic. The exception was Mrs Saunders who felt that bullying was an overused term, especially by her pupils, and *‘so to some extent you are trying to decide what level the problem is and to what extent you need to intervene’* (Int 1). Teachers’ initial reluctance to label current pupils was not always matched with similar reserve when considering potential or predicted involvement. Mrs Penfold sensed that one boy could *become* (my emphasis) a victim, then she recalled that his colleagues hid his pencil and his rubber *‘and that’s a form of bullying’* (Int 1).

Inhibitions related to nominations or considering actions as bullying often disappeared as teachers reflected on their judgements through the interviews and there was confirmation that selection of pupils was easier, or that behaviour patterns became more apparent, with the older pupils. The interviews occasionally led to changes of perception as the ideas of staff unfolded. Miss Robins had no reservation in nominating a child as a victim, but reflection led eventually to his being considered a perpetrator. He *‘likes to play the victim ... the sort who bullies so that someone will bully him back a little bit more ... I think he is really devious’* and she elaborated by saying that *‘he gets the attention so he’s the powerful one’* (Int1). The simple ‘bully’ ‘victim’ model again proved problematic. Mrs Barnes (Int 1) stated that Asif, Wasim’s brother, aggressively rejected the *‘leadership’* of others rather than bullied them and Glynn, who was being excluded by his peers *‘maybe you can’t put bullying as a tag on it. For instance a child who never gets asked into a group if they are doing group work’* (Int 1). What she described was not a deliberate act by individuals, but a group form of social exclusion. It resembled the forms of exclusion that Ms James had noted in discussion of

Lorraine and I considered that life must have been similar for Edward earlier in his school career. Mrs Adams talked of the pressure that one girl was putting on another as bullying. *'There's no physical contact, not that kind of bullying'*, but a persistent pressure to play that was upsetting to a point that the recipient had recently refused to eat her lunch. Recognising that it was not typical of behaviours usually described as bullying, she added that it was sufficient pressure to amount to a form of blackmail.

In summary, many teaching staff had not found nominating involved pupils from their classes to be straightforward and there had been a genuine concern not to label pupils. I understood their reticence but I was concerned that there was a need for recognition of the seriousness of the experiences of certain younger pupils. The three key case study pupils, Lorraine, Kevin and Edward, all lacked social skills and a capacity to develop and maintain friendships. It was hard not to conclude that these shortcomings were likely to have been apparent earlier in their school careers, in the ways that teachers of younger pupils had described, and may have benefited from earlier intervention.

The centrality of definition was evident and certain teachers linked their personal definition, made at the outset of interviews, to the process of selecting pupils, events or relationships. Through this research teachers were beginning to examine their understanding of the subject, including ideas of 'levels' of bullying and definitions delineating boundaries between aggressive behaviours and bullying. The view that younger children adopt a broader definition of bullying than their older peers (Smith and Levan, 1995) and the definitional and labelling problems experienced by this group of teachers raised significant issues for me.

Teachers' reticence to categorise behaviours which their pupils, and consequently, perhaps, parents, consider as bullying had the potential to lead to feelings amongst pupils that teachers do not take their reporting of incidents seriously. Increased use of the term 'bullying' by pupils and parents, a policy that invited an open 'telling' culture and growing national and international awareness were generating forces that potentially threatened the reluctance of staff to openly employ the terminology.

4:4 COUNTERING BULLYING

Schools have a moral obligation to increase their effectiveness in the area of bullying. To side-step or ignore this issue is to undervalue the dignity, welfare and personal development of those individuals in our care.

(Besag and Packer, 1992, p.38)

Analysis of participants' feelings about the bullying issue and the way that Nicholas Street School dealt with it has been divided into three broad areas:

- attitude to the bullying issue;
- policy, both at school and 'Cluster' group level;
- ways of dealing with bullying incidents or bullying relationships.

However, this is not a rigid framework and there are elements that cross artificial boundaries generated here, such as the times when teachers spoke of school policy in terms of their classroom practice.

4:4(i) Attitude to the bullying issue

Interviews with teachers focused on contemporary interest in bullying which, in the often naturalistic way that the interviews developed, permitted an exploration of their feelings about the subject. Parent and pupil interviews invited exploration in an opportunistic way, seizing the chance to talk about how they felt about the bullying issue as chances presented

themselves. In the case of pupils data were amplified by an open-ended sentence completion from the questionnaire (Appendix 10).

The influence of a headteacher in determining policy and practice has been well documented indeed it is an expectation of the role (Fullan, 1982). Throughout the data gathering I found that the opinions and ideas of Mr Benjamin were of significance to all key groups and permeated the thinking of many participants. Here was the source of the rules, regulations and assistance for pupils, the prevailing determinant of the school ethos for the staff and the support, guidance and clarity for parents, ie the source of power. Here also might have been a source of reticence and lack of distinctive policy and practice directed at countering bullying.

The initial receptiveness of the Headteacher may have been a comment on his open attitude towards bullying and research into a sensitive issue being undertaken in his school. After acknowledging that bullying occurred in his school, he declared his intention to deal with it. Many staff echoed his views relating to the centrality of individual case management and the presence of a caring ethos in the school. He saw the school culture as a key factor in determining policy, adding that the timing of any change was material. His thoughts included that name-calling now formed part of his understanding of bullying and he recognised the need for children to express themselves as well as the potential problems that such a freedom brings. Intermingled with positive approaches was an apprehension, also found amongst the teachers, concerning the link between bullying and the media which, both stimulated awareness yet also caused problems.

Mr Benjamin: *I think there is a danger, a real danger, of talking the problem up.... because once you start saying 'bullying' 'bullying' and 'it is this, this and this', once you start saying that 'everyone has been bullied' ...you have got a major problem on your hands. (Int 2)*

Throughout interviews Mr Benjamin had been aware of his lack of precise thinking and he confided in me that the interviews were his first real opportunity to think deeply about the subject, despite being a member of the 'Cluster' group headteachers who had devised their own policy. He also declared that seeing a copy of the first interview led to feelings of embarrassment about the 'meandering' nature of his thoughts. To me they were both indicative of his contemplative approach and an acknowledgement of the complexity of the subject being investigated. The depth of thought that characterised the second interview followed what appeared to have been a high level of reflection on the hard copy of the first. Here he conveyed powerful messages about interpretation of the events as bullying and his fundamental approach resembled that which Rigby (1996) has identified as 'humanistic'. He summarised what he believed the school's ethos to be:

Mr Benjamin: *Not only have you got a duty to protect the children who are or who feel that they have been bullied, we've got a job to educate the bullies as well. ... I don't think we are about negative things at all. I think the whole ethos of the school is towards the positive as often as we can. ... Our view towards behaviour or misbehaviour, appropriate behaviour has to be positive ... You try to develop an environment where everyone feels comfortable, happy and secure and, in doing so, you also develop an atmosphere where people can say what they like without fear and that's good but sometimes they say things that upset other people without*

realising it, so if you have a child that feels they are inadequate in some way, and that inadequacy comes up in somebody's conversation, they feel down, not just children, but adults as well.
(Int 2)

Although we were not to return to the subject of school ethos in any direct way, the interview contained sufficient information to illustrate an undercurrent of concern for all, including bullies, which he recognised might have accompanying problems. However the perception that there was a '*danger of talking the problem up*' created an impression that open approaches in policy and practice were potentially damaging to the image of the school.

From the teaching staff two broad schools of thought on the contemporary popular interest in bullying emerged from a labyrinth of data supplied. The first welcomed and embraced the attention being given to bullying with emphasis that schools would benefit from awareness raising. Mrs Monroe and Mrs Barnes described the topic as '*important*'. The second, whilst not being dismissive, felt that it was a subject that they were being compelled to consider, rather than it emerging naturally as part of the school's development. Much of this antipathy was based on attention given to individual cases by the mass media and they dominated the thoughts of those who saw interest as being externally generated.

Mrs Richards: *Well it is in the media ... but I don't feel it's anymore in this school now than when I arrived 10 years ago. ... I am not sure that we need to have a huge push if it isn't actually here.*
(Int 2)

Mr Hogan's welcoming '*positive*' response was qualified by '*I think the media interest and the sensationalising of particular notorious cases can be unhelpful*' (Int 1). Others also invoked

the media as problematic with Mrs Little stating that interest was *'somewhat media generated'* (Int 1). Mrs Saunders and Mr Yates saw it as a *'bandwagon'* with the latter adding that he felt that it would decline as a high profile subject and that being coerced into taking action through governmental or parental pressure could be conceived as bullying. The unease over an increasing media focus nurtured a resistance from a few teachers and a feeling of being compelled to address it. Despite the justification behind negative feelings expressed, I was left with a perception that the media and governmental requirements were occasionally functioning to provide excuses, as well as reasons, for inertia. Certainly there was little sense of urgency, which may have been connected with the contemplation required in the interview process. Miss Robins concluded that the subject was fashionable, but not consistently so, as *'one minute it is the "in" thing to be talking about and the next thing it's not'* (Int 1). Discussions on the media were usually a precursor to a denial of a considerable bullying presence in the school or an attempt to sustain a regime that maintains a low profile for the topic.

The problem of media attention was linked with an increasingly abundant use of the term *'bullying'* by parents. Mrs Monroe, Mrs Reardon, Mrs Richards and Mrs Saunders all subscribed to the idea that parents were increasingly using the term *'bullying'* to describe what their child had experienced and two of this group developed their thinking, relating it to labelling and definition. Mrs Saunders added that *'It is in the media, parents talk about it. I think it can be bad as it's used as a label when it may not necessarily be the problem. It may just part of their process of growing up'* (Int 1). In making a similar point Mrs Richards combined media influence, parents and the primacy of definition.

Mrs Richards: *Definitely it comes up in the latest women's magazine and you tend to get the odd parent coming in and saying, 'Johnny is being bullied' and you actually say 'well what is it that is being done' and that's when I come back to find that quite often it's teasing, name-calling.*
(Int 1)

Further cautionary views on raising awareness amongst parents existed, with a tension between being open and drawing attention to a problem. Mrs Monroe felt it was *'a good idea that they (parents) are more aware of it, ... although it could heighten their awareness even more ... the people you don't really want to be focused in on it'* (Int 2). This replicated the cautionary thinking behind the awareness of Ms Alexander that *'there is a fine line between information giving and stirring up'* (Int 2) and she continued to talk in terms of a need to be open with individual parents, to involve them in information gathering and formulating solutions. However, she remained cautious about *'the need to have a huge push'* (Int 2).

Despite reservations about media interest, a prevailing positive ethos was discernible. The importance of this was exposed in an informal comment (13/5/94) from Mr Benjamin that revealed that following his promotion to headship, the consequent attempt to appoint a Deputy had not proved fruitful, adding that the Governors had failed to find someone who would fit into the ethos. The arrival at the school of the reflective Mrs Little confirmed that, ideologically, at least, they had eventually been successful. She observed that the school possessed *'a history of ... analysing interactions and dealing with them on an individual basis'* (Int 1). For Mrs Little the culture of the school and especially the timing of the introduction of

policy and practice on bullying would inform the level of transparency that a school would be able to adopt:

Mrs Little: *If ... it's not a particular problem, when people are not particularly heated about it, then you can have an open discussion without necessarily stirring up a hornet's nest, it depends on the time you choose to have the discussion. (Int 1)*

Later she returned, more critically, to that which was open and understood and that which was implied, concluding that matters were far from perfect.

Mrs Little: *Perhaps more work needs to be done in making it explicit If the problem exists or the children are perceiving it as a problem or the parents are perceiving a problem, or if you perceive that you need to make it clear what you see as unacceptable, it is better to do it in an open way. (Int 1)*

She possessed a tolerance of parents' views as well as a transparency in handling the subject and her stance here contrasted with particular colleagues' views that excessive deployment of the term 'bullying' was negative or that parental involvement was problematic.

Evidence of a pride in the ways that matters were handled was echoed elsewhere. *'All the teachers care, which is the first stage to eliminating it'* (Mrs Adams, Int 1), although this had not always been the case as *'sometimes in the past it has not been recognised'* (Mrs Penfold, Int 1). From my initiation in their school, the teachers had transmitted a message of openness, tolerance and flexibility. However cautions were present and Mrs Monroe's *'adverse effect'*

was symptomatic of a tension between being open and drawing excessive attention of parents, who appeared as the main group providing impetus for change and to whom attention now turns.

While not a subject that surfaced in all interviews with parents the topicality of the subject of bullying in schools occasionally came to the fore. When it did, parents also cited the media, focusing principally on television, perceiving its contribution to be largely negative. Mrs Crane referred to *'stories in media, which we all watch'* placing too much emphasis on bullying and Mrs Ibis was more specific, citing the influence of one children's television programme, 'Grange Hill', as being *'responsible for a lot of things that are happening in schools'*. It was Mr Lark who provided depth of insight, stepping beyond blaming to offer views based on historical dimensions and centred on attitudes to punishment, thresholds of toleration and, again, the media.

Mr Lark: *Bullying has always been there, it's a bit like violence, the streets aren't safe anymore. The streets have never been safe. It's just I think our toleration of something like violence as far as bullying is concerned, our threshold of toleration is a lot lower perhaps as a society than it has been in the past; so you know we are much more aware of it, much more conscious of it, the media brings it to our attention more. Another view of it might be also the way in which our treatment of children in terms of punishment of children has changed so that in a situation where, 20 or 30 years ago, where quite a lot of violence was done to children in the home in terms of their punishment, which isn't tolerated as much now, therefore parents won't tolerate it or schools won't tolerate it, society won't tolerate it when you are getting that kind of punishment being inflicted by one child on another.*

The general reaction of parents to contemporary interest in bullying was positive. That these parents had elected to be involved in the research indicated that they probably felt that they had a contribution to make and that bullying was matter of significance for them. Like the teachers they were contemplative and, even when describing the experiences of their own children, they sustained a calm, meditative atmosphere and chose their words with thoughtful precision. The intolerance of parents mentioned in Mr Lark's view, and perceived by teachers at the school, was not evident in this sample. The opportunity to recall experiences and to offer a considered opinion in a dispassionate yet concerned way seemed to be relished by them.

Responses in questionnaires about the importance of the bullying issue for schools were more strident and emotive. Here there was a unanimous endorsement of the issue as an important one, and, again, I was compelled to question whether they would have chosen to be involved if they were not of that opinion. The reasoning behind the answers resembled views held by children in that many focussed on the long and short-term impact on the victim (Appendix 29).

Amongst the concerns were the (questionnaire number in brackets):

- damage to the 'victim's confidence' and self-esteem (6, 7 and 11);
- impact on the child's work (1, 5, 10, and 13) with a link (10) to educational standards and a broader national impact;
- need for a child to feel safe and happy (2 and 9) with the former linking bullying to adult violence if not checked at school level;
- problem being an increasing one 'if the media is to be believed'; (8)

- representation of a poor model of human interaction (2, 6, 11 and 15)

One parent used the vehicle of the questionnaire to extensively and emotionally relate that her son had been bullied, and she conveyed the impression that her responses were functioning as a therapeutic release (5). Two almost identical answers located blame on lack of parenting skills and teachers being disempowered through lack of effective punishments (3 and 12). Here it should be noted that one respondent was a teacher herself (12) and could have been conveying a degree of professional frustration.

Such was the contrast in feel between responses in interviews and questionnaires that it suggested that either the respondent groups held very different views or my presence had a mollifying influence on interviews or, conversely, the anonymity of questionnaires was being used as a means of releasing anxiety and frustration which further highlighted the centrality of the research tool to data generated.

Children's responses indicated that bullying was a significant matter and they endorsed the seriousness conveyed in both the comment and the feel of interview responses as exemplified by Lorraine and many others. Classifying reasons given for positive answers to questionnaire enquiries about bullying being an 'important problem' revealed a key sense of concern beyond the immediate and the individual (Appendix 30). They ranged from worry about physical and emotional hurt (549), the potential effect on relationships within school (522), descriptions of extent of the problem (528), moral judgements (651) and the impact on the victims (537).

Indeed the categories established resembled the responses of the parents and would have served as a framework for analysis had there been more than 15 respondents.

Because people get upset. (549)

Because all children have to try to get on or else no one would get on. (522)

Because you should not bully. (651)

Because quite a lot of people get bullied. (528)

It could spoil your childhood life which is important. (537)

During interviews an indignant or outraged tone was transmitted through terms such as ‘horrible’ (Nicola, Bruce, Annette) ‘terrible’ (Jacob) and ‘mean’ (Julie). Some pupils who exhibited their distaste were also those who admitted involvement as perpetrators in bullying, which suggested that I was being told what pupils felt I wanted hear. It reminded me that perhaps all respondents were not passionately committed to countering bullying, but that they were merely meeting what they saw to be the requirements of the task.

Data indicating the significance of bullying for pupils showed none of the reservation that was present amongst the teachers. They had no parallel pressures to those that caused particular teachers to consider contemporary publicity as intrusive. Parents had also not experienced external pressures to respond, although some had demonstrated awareness of the media profile of the topic.

4:4(ii) Externally Generated Policy

The structure of this policy, described by the local 'Cluster' group of schools as a 'guide', offered support and advice to three key groups (children, staff and parents) plus an overarching 'policy statement'. The main text of the documents has been reproduced, without identifiers of either school or geographical location (Appendices 14-17). The documents were circulated throughout the schools in the area and each group received a slightly differentiated version. They represented a consensus of advice and information on bullying arrived at by local headteachers, including Mr Benjamin, who urged pupils, teachers and parents to take the problem seriously, take action and emphasised that 'bullying and harassment' will not be tolerated.

Included in the statements were definitions of bullying for staff and parents, but none for the pupils, which meant that adults were informed of the group's thinking as to what constituted bullying, but the children were denied their deliberations. There was also an inconsistency in definitions with the 'policy statement' emphasising 'hurt' and 'intent' with the broad stance that 'deliberately making others feel uncomfortable' was bullying, but not including this idea in the advice for adults. However, staff and parents were informed that an 'isolated incident' could be bullying, which was not a concept embraced in the 'policy statement'. Despite the inconsistencies there had been a clear attempt to offer advice and inform thinking and it merited consideration by its various intended audiences.

It was apparent during the early phase of data gathering that the policy had made little impact on pupils and no one recalled it in any detail. After the introduction of the policy there was no follow-up on the subject by staff with the pupils and they had been dismissive about it, perceiving it to be little more than another piece of paper that had to be taken home. I was tempted to include the subject in questionnaires, but found it difficult to describe what appeared to be such an unfamiliar document and I thought it would serve to complicate matters.

I assumed that, since he was part of the process of creating it, Mr Benjamin would be an enthusiastic endorser of the policy and he was quick to point out the value of the schools being able to say that they possessed such a set of documents. However, I found him to be critical of the process involved in devising the various documents since they had not evolved from within his school, had not been initiated by himself and he felt they were not owned by Nicholas Street School. He was also concerned about the speed at which the policy had been devised, stating that '*writing a school policy is a very long process*' (Int 2). He emphasised that, although he could not disagree with particular statements made in the policy, it was not created by the school and consequently received little attention from any group in the school. This was to be confirmed many times as data from other sources were analysed. Mr Benjamin's reluctance to sanction '*bolt on philosophies*' may have contributed to his apparent lack of regard for the policy, echoing McNamara's (1995) plea that policy should reflect a school's specific culture and beliefs. Despite my positive feelings about my relationship with the Headteacher, I felt that a question seeking why he had involved himself in a series of documents about which he felt so negative would have been counter productive. I considered

that he was new to the post and would have been the least experienced Headteacher in that group which may have inhibited him with his peers.

The policy had gone largely unnoticed by the majority of the teaching staff, underlining the remote nature of its creation and that there had been no 'collective review' (Brighouse and Woods, 1999, p.16). Where comment was made it confirmed a lack of impact. Mrs Monroe and Mrs Fashin endorsed it in principle, although the former had *'flicked through it'*, (Int 1) saw value in the differentiated versions and Mrs Fashin thought it was *'very good that they are involving children, parents and staff, but I'm sorry I haven't read it yet'* (Int 1). Here 'including' might have been a more accurate term as 'involving' implied being part of a creative process that had not been the case.

For one or two teachers mention of the document had served to remind them about it or to enlighten them about it in the first place. However laudable the aspirations of such guidance it had not caught the attention of the teachers. If the aspirations of the collected headteachers had been to create a uniformity of approach, and if Nicholas Street were an example of the outcome of their deliberations, then what had been achieved was minimal. Indeed policy generated at such a remote distance from the classroom appeared to have had little impact on thinking among the staff who rarely echoed ideas from the documents or cited them in their answers.

If the 'Cluster' group's statements had made an impact at all it had been on the parents, indeed two questionnaire respondents were to mention it (8 and 14) and it arose, unprompted, during

several interviews, where I was to find increased knowledge and recognition of the deliberations of the headteachers. Their reaction to the policy initiative illustrated both its potential and its problems. Benefits were seen to be that the process of devising policy might have helped all the schools to share ideas and publicise concern without ever giving the impression that it was a specific problem in one school in particular.

Mrs Crane: *If I was Mr Benjamin, I would not want people to get the impression that there was a great problem about bullying at Nicholas Street School.*

There was approval of the opportunity to talk with their children about the subject that it had facilitated. Mrs Kite felt that *'a lot of what it was saying was common sense, it was things that I think I would have done in that situation anyway.'* Others were equally uninspired by the document or cautioned that it was insufficient, especially without amplification, through a more long-term strategy to support the policy. Only one parent was totally condemning since for Mrs Owl *'it was a load of political correctness ... very twee but not reality.'*

The lack of knowledge of the documents amongst other groups was replicated with a few parents and it had made little impact with no one relating key elements contained within it.

'I read it, I think it stayed on the kitchen table for a while...' (Mrs Ibis).

Amongst the challenges faced by the headteachers in addressing bullying through written policy were those parents whose children had not experienced or been involved in bullying. They were unlikely to possess the same emotional engagement as those cognisant of the

familial stresses that bullying can bring. A further obstacle was that without a more personal opportunity to exchange ideas and become involved, the translation of key ideas into practice was not understood.

Mrs Nightingale: *That doesn't apply to us, we don't have any problems. That's nothing to do with my children and you know, I don't think they are getting bullied or anything and put it in the bin.*

Mr Nightingale: *I can't remember exactly, I thought some of it was a bit 'airy fairy'.*

In its defence the vagueness or idealism implied by terms such as 'airy fairy' did not match the clarity of advice given in the document. The focus of the strategy statement addressed victims of bullying and how incidents might be managed with a parental perspective in mind. At the centre of the thinking of the guide for parents was an endorsement of immediate contact with school with a view to joint action planning. Less emphasis was placed upon general advice for parents who suspected or had become aware that their child might be involved as a bully or for parents of all non-involved pupils, despite the fact that peers can function as a significant support group (Sharp, 1996a; Young, 1998). The natural desire to provide clear action in support of victims may have overridden addressing the more sensitive or problematic areas, that of working with perpetrators in schools or the vital arena of the context in which bullying takes place, the school itself.

One parent made reference to the policy in discussion with her son, Terry, who was experiencing bullying at Nicholas Street and the rhetoric and reality gap appeared substantial.

It illustrated how little ownership, and consequently confidence, had been developed by what seemed destined to be little more than a paper exercise.

Mrs Finch: *I started by saying, well this is what they suggest you do you say, firmly, something and you go and play with somebody else. He said, 'Mum it's crap, that doesn't happen, you go and play with somebody else and they will follow you and you end up not being able to play with your friends and so you are on your own. Grown ups write this and they think it's good, but it doesn't work.'*

The feelings of powerlessness displayed by Terry Finch were symptomatic of the fact that documentary advice from possessors of considerable power in schools, the headteachers, delivered from the remoteness of their positions, appeared to have had little or no impact. Imposed rhetoric, however well intentioned and thought through, without the involvement of those nearest to the emotional impact of bullying, had done little to improve understanding or empowerment in dealing with bullying situations at individual or school level. The need, maybe compulsion, to respond to what seemed to be seen by some as a fashionable subject led to a paper solution with no follow up at Nicholas Street School. This had been what Glover et al. (1998, p.58) have described a 'top down' approach and there had been no involvement of staff or pupils, no sharing of power or ownership and no 'shared values'. The only conclusion to be reached was that it was a paper policy that failed to make the impact that the ideas contained within it had merited.

4:4(iii) Internally Generated Policy

The first opportunity to speak about the research with Mr Benjamin had begun with a brief exploration of the recent past and current programmes in managing behaviour. He mentioned that his predecessor had pursued a policy of sanctions based behaviour management. 'Inappropriate' behaviour was recorded in a book and, should pupils have their name taken on three occasions, parents would be informed and adult imposed sanctions considered (Int 1). In his opinion this was unsatisfactory, both ideologically and operationally. In the case of the former he wanted to redirect any changes to rewarding positive behaviour rather than punishing negative behaviours. In practice it seemed to be a system that was supported and enforced by a limited number of staff and their interventions were proving counter productive. In his criticism of the prevailing system, he confided that he was dissatisfied with two staff, although no names were offered or sought.

Mr Benjamin: *We need to change because some teachers and some MTAs apply it too strictly. We need flexibility ... We need to understand that inappropriate behaviour has a cause. I am the concerned that it is negative. Two teachers and three MTAs are a problem. (Int 1)*

Who determined what was 'inappropriate' was an issue that I had not developed at the time but which, after having considered the views of the pupils and parents, I now regret. The differences in the way that bullying can be conceptualised and the ways that pupils, such as Lorraine, justified their actions meant that 'inappropriate' for some may not be seen as such by others.

As he pondered his own stance he perceived his role as a subversive change agent:

Mr Benjamin: *What I have done since becoming head is to undermine the system, by talking to them, appealing to their growing adult feelings. But not the very young children who I treat in a matter of fact way – ‘that’s a pity you will miss playtime’ etc. (Int 1)*

These differentiated views based on maturational factors resembled Pikas’s (1989a; 1989b) ideas on dealing with bullying. He proposed that the more intricate ‘Shared Concern Method’ was used with older pupils and a more simplistic approach based on the power of the teacher to request a stop to the bullying, the ‘Suggestive Command Method’, was deployed with younger pupils.

Later Mr Benjamin elaborated on how the subversion would take place. He would not encourage the use of the sanction book, but confessed that he was prepared to leave it in place (Int 2). Even in this relatively early stage of our relationship, I felt that I might tentatively challenge his thinking.

CL: *If I ask the children what do you do if you have been bullied your name figures quite highly but the sanctions book also gets a mention.*

Mr Benjamin: *Yes it has had a high profile in threatening children but never to me ... children are aware of it and I am not unhappy to carry on letting them be aware of it. I am just unhappy about it when it is being used. (Int 2)*

He displayed diffidence in confronting the two teaching staff who were resistant to change and who championed more punitive approaches. But for them he might have been more willing to openly abandon the sanction book as it represented a link with the previous headteacher and he felt reluctant to impose what they might perceive as a radical departure. Mr Benjamin also indicated that the school would need to develop its own approaches and ‘ownership’ was a key factor here. He felt that change would not come through a prescribed method but through an evolution of ideas, owned and created by the staff, over a period of time. Power to decide change would then pass from headteacher to staff, but there was no mention of pupil involvement. He did not want an approach that had been developed elsewhere *‘although it may be good, we don’t have ownership if we’ve bought it in’* (Int 1). Acknowledging that the school was in a period of evolution I pressed him to discuss how he would manage an incident in the current situation. I needed to consider the extent to which others would endorse his views. His response, highlighting vulnerability, was again typical of the prevailing honesty of our exchanges.

Mr Benjamin: *Straight to the Achilles’ Heel. When I deal with it personally I try to make them understand why it has happened and that the bully has got problems. Some don’t like this and want punishment. (Int 1)*

Even within the four staff of the Upper School a divergence of views about dealing with bullying had been evident and their colleagues mirrored this diversity. Distinguishing a dominant theme was difficult, but if there was one, it was that *‘people try to deal with it as the situation arises’* (Mrs Saunders, Int 2) and *‘I think the actual issue of bullying is only dealt with when it happens, there and then’* (Ms James, Int 1).

Whether reactivity was a deliberate policy that had been agreed, a practice developed over a period of time or whether it was a substitute for the lack of coherent, consensual approaches was unclear. Mrs Little had come from a school where there was an agreed, highly prescriptive ‘imported’ policy, Canter’s ‘Assertive Discipline’ (Wolfgang, 1995), but she recognised that staff at Nicholas Street considered the *‘uniqueness of each situation’* (Int 1).

Whilst the majority of staff conveyed contentment with current approaches to incidents, without any policy development or training related to awareness raising or specific intervention, there were comments that indicated that other factors may have impinged upon any consideration of bullying. One was the quantity of government led change.

Miss Robins: *The major focus with so much coming in is the National Curriculum.*

CL: *Do you think the whole bullying issue has been undermined by other government initiatives?*

Miss Robins: *Yeah, probably ... in the day to day running of the classroom what we are trying to do now is get ourselves organised in terms of the curriculum. That’s taking a lot of our energies. (Int 1)*

When I listened to the reasoning of Miss Robins and the reliance on the approach of treating each case on merit, I returned to the perplexing problem of offering excuses, rather than reasons, for apparent inertia. Many other schools in the early to mid 1990s could also have invoked imposed innovation overload as a reason for little planned and direct action to counter bullying, yet the literature on the subject reveals that there were many schools who had adopted or created specific approaches (Foster and Thompson, 1991; Brier and Ahmad, 1991).

Case study can present opportunities to probe in increased depth during the evolution of the research. On occasions a key factor was proximity to the member of staff which enabled a more challenging tone to interviews. Ms James was one such person whom I felt I could confront by the time of our second interview. She had underlined the pressure of time, the need for a preventative approach and that *'the school deals with every issue as it arises'* (Int 1). I challenged the adequacy of that form of response.

Ms James: *I don't think it is good enough I know you can make a hundred excuses. I think we ought to be more aware of the ways of how we could perhaps prevent bullying and the ways we could deal with children, and the way we interact with them which could help them prevent lots of incidences. I think we are dealing with it the best way we know how, at the moment, but it would be better to have more cases where it didn't arise and that would be done through knowing more about it probably.*
(Int 1)

Other responses revealed a picture of inconsistency and a lack of coherence. Amongst the range were:

Mr Yates: *It is a consistent view that teasing and name-calling are definitely not allowed ... and that we are all united on that.*
(Int 1)

Mrs Monroe: *We respond positively. I think we are aware as staff of the issue.* (Int 1)

Mr Hogan: *We have certainly looked at it, talked about it but we haven't got down to saying right we are going to produce a policy and strategies for dealing with it as and when it occurs.* (Int 1)

Confidence that bullying had been reviewed was not replicated elsewhere and no other member of staff talked of such consideration.

Another disparity was Mrs Richard's idea of bullying forming part of a wider behaviour policy (Jenner and Greetham, 1995), which was contradicted by Mrs Adams's confessed lack of awareness of any such behaviour policy. Whether integrated into a broader behaviour policy or distinct and separate, there was a growing contemporary pressure on schools to make distinct statements about bullying and how the school was addressing it (DfE Circular 8/94, 1994, Para 56).

I gained an impression that the teachers took reported bullying seriously, however many had spoken of a uniformity of policy that was rarely made evident. It was best summarised by Mrs Penfold who, having celebrated that bullying was picked up '*as soon as we notice it, or it's drawn to our attention,*' implied that harmony of approach had yet to be achieved and that '*it would be good to be consistent, otherwise it could be that you undermine, quite by accident, another member of staff*' (Int 2). That they had not formally considered the subject of bullying with a view to arriving at consensus was apparent and seemed to render the task of finding a concord with the views of parents and pupils unlikely.

Enquiry into parent's understanding of school policy drew a range of both responses contributing to a picture of potential success inhibited by confusion (Appendix 31). The Headteacher was cited as the main, if not only, source of policy from questionnaire respondents (4, 9, 13), some drew attention to the 'leaflet' from the 'Cluster' group (8 and 14)

and others confessed ignorance of any school policy (6 and 10) with a degree of frustration added, *'I have no idea, but I wish it was made publicly known'* (10).

The apparent lack of communication regarding policy and practice was illustrated by Mrs Avocet's concern that having reported her son being bullied *'you are sort of left in limbo, not knowing whether they have just forgotten about it.'* Parents often felt that policy demanded reporting bullying to the teacher first and when there appeared to be a lack of evidence of an improvement then the Headteacher's power to make change was called upon. This was exemplified by Mrs Finch's recollection that she wrote *'a quite a Mrs Angry letter to Mr Benjamin and he asked me almost immediately to come and see him about it.'* The staff's celebration of treating each case individually and low key approach appeared to have translated into a number of parents being unaware of what was required of them and unsure of school policy.

Amongst the pupils there was no evidence that school policy on bullying had been openly addressed beyond the distribution of the 'Cluster' group documentation. In seeking to identify pupils' perceptions of policy I was compelled to search for their understanding of its potential manifestation, the 'rules' regarding bullying. Amidst a smattering of 'don't know' responses in questionnaires were a few classroom-based ideas such as rules pinned to the walls.

In pursuing the matter with Year 5 the relationship between what appeared to be understanding of the school rule and prevailing tone adopted by the class teacher became evident. Over half of the pupils in Mr Yates's class stated that they did not know of a school

rule, whereas only three from Mr Hogan's class replied in a similar manner. Statements that conveyed a message that bullying was not allowed were occasionally followed by descriptions of the nature of punishment for rule breaking. The strong disciplinarian stance of Mr Hogan may have influenced his pupils' perception of the existence of a rule and, perhaps, the efficacy of school practice as more than any other class the children of 5H felt that bullying was well managed.

Table 14: Questionnaire responses on how well the school dealt with bullying											
<i>How well does the school deal with bullying and nasty teasing?</i>											
<i>'very well indeed', 'quite well', 'neither well nor badly', 'quite badly' and 'very badly indeed'</i>											
<i>Value Label</i>		<i>ALL</i>		<i>5L</i>		<i>5H</i>		<i>6Y</i>		<i>6J</i>	
		<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>%</i>
Very well		9	8.7	1	2.95	4	22.2	4	16.7	0	0
Quite well		34	32.7	12	35.5	8	44.4	9	37.5	5	17.9
Neither		19	18.3	6	17.6	2	11.1	3	12.5	8	28.6
Quite badly		28	26.9	9	26.5	2	11.1	6	25.0	11	39.3
Very badly		14	13.5	6	17.6	2	11.1	2	8.3	4	14.3
	Total	104		34	100	18	100	24	100	28	100
	<i>Missing cases 0</i>										

Pupils appeared to be stating that teachers, MTAs and pupils themselves could all 'do more to help' (Appendix 18). However, using SPSS to examine responses revealed a strong negative correlation between how well pupils perceived bullying was dealt with and whether *teachers* could do more to help (Table 15). There was no significant correlation between pupils' perceptions on how well bullying was dealt with and whether MTAs or pupils themselves could do more. It seemed to suggest that pupils, despite acknowledging the need for more

action, looked not just to adults, but the powerful adults, to locate responsibility for shortcomings and that they did not assume responsibility for dealing with matters themselves, nor did they place blame or hope with the MTAs.

Table 15: Correlation between how well the school dealt with bullying and whether teachers, MTAs and pupils could do more to help		
Question		
	<i>Q7a) How well does this school deal with bullying and nasty teasing? (‘Very well indeed’, ‘Quite well’, ‘Neither well nor badly’, ‘Quite badly’, ‘Very badly indeed’)</i>	
<i>Q8a) Do you think that teachers could do more to help? (‘Yes’ or ‘No’)</i>	Pearson Correlation	-.388
	Significance	.000
	N	102
<i>Q9a) Do you think that mealtime assistants [dinner ladies] could do more to help? (‘Yes’ or ‘No’)</i>	Pearson Correlation	-.098
	Significance	.323
	N	103
<i>Q10a) Do you think that the pupils themselves could do more to help? (‘Yes’ or ‘No’)</i>	Pearson Correlation	-.073
	Significance	.466
	N	101

Whilst the influence of the teacher was significant it also seemed that the acquisition of ‘the rule’ came through a whole school assembly meeting. Lorraine had portrayed Mr Benjamin as the deliverer of rules through his assemblies and Mr Hogan as the principal purveyor in practice. Interviews continually confirmed that assemblies were the main communication method employed and pupils recalled how Mr Benjamin not only raised incidents of bullying, but also used the arena to transmit rules. The prevailing theme was that bullying was unpleasant and pupils were not to get involved. It was to be no more specific than that. One exception was Wasim’s account of an assembly that Mr Hogan had led in response to what could have been racial taunts that had compelled the pupil’s father to complain to the school when Wasim had been in Year 5. According to Wasim Mr Hogan had taken an assembly accusing a few children of ‘calling names. *If you do we are going to send a letter to your parents at home. If it happens again we are going to deal with you*’ (Int 2). This account

enhanced my impression that the teachers, especially the Headteacher, were perceived as purveyors of 'the rule' and the power and that pupils and parents felt little sense of involvement. It was also obvious that there was a tension in that, to use the Rigby's (1996) terms, 'legalistic' and 'moralistic' messages were received by children when, from the outset of the data collection, teachers, especially the Headteacher, had expressed views that were distinctly 'humanistic' in tone.

4:4(iv) School Practice

The section is an analysis of the perceptions of teachers, parents, MTAs and pupils of the way that the various groups might have been involved in dealing with bullying. Table 16 provides a synopsis of the main findings.

Teachers

Throughout interviews I linked my own questions with ideas and experiences that were developed from conversations with Lorraine. These provided a loose framework that included: opening up the issue of bullying at school and class level; the demand for punishment and the seeking of the truth and whether the focus should be on the bully or the victim.

I have spoken of the Headteacher's disregard for sanctions and the 'book' in which staff wrote the names of pupils who had committed misdemeanours, but he determined not to encourage its use rather than to abolish it. He was concerned to focus on less punitive approaches as

'we've got to educate the bullies as well' (Int 2) and I was interested to understand teachers' perceptions of this in practical terms.

Table 16: Summary of perceptions of groups on ways that bullying was or could be managed.			
	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>MTAs</i>	<i>Pupils</i>
Teachers' views on	<p>1) Inconsistent in belief that it was being addressed and the role that punishment might play.</p> <p>2) Acknowledged that the search for facts was not always productive, yet parents often wanted facts.</p> <p>3) Believed in working with perpetrators <i>and</i> victims.</p>	<p>Most teachers felt that they were 'hopeless' and offered a poor level of skills. There was a degree of sympathy, recognition of the need for training and even criticism of the lack of training given by teachers to MTAs.</p>	<p>Extensive use made of 'circle time' in the context of pupils considering bullying incidents. Pupil empowerment beyond that was rarely raised as teachers looked to themselves for the resolution of problems.</p>
Parents' views on	<p>Most believed it was taken seriously but some felt that:</p> <p>a) intervention by the headteacher confirmed seriousness and informed action.</p> <p>b) there was an inertia until parents became involved.</p> <p>c) there should be more punishment.</p>	<p>Lacked authority, clarity of lines of communication, a reluctance to act and tendency to leave intervention until too late.</p>	<p>1) Victim given advice 'to tell' appearing the majority viewpoint but with retaliation 'stand up for yourself' also present</p> <p>2) Bully/bystander by taking responsibility and considering the effect it has upon the feelings of others.</p> <p>3) Moral stance, 'children need to know to bully is wrong'</p>
Pupils' views on	<p>1) Often based choice of adult support on familiarity (class teacher) or formal power (headteacher).</p> <p>2) Inconsistent - some looked to authoritarian methods, others to counselling based approaches.</p>	<p>Inert and uncaring, limited, ineffective, needing to improve attitude or communication or acknowledged that they were under resourced.</p>	<p>Variety of advice urging:</p> <p>1) victims to defend themselves or ignore</p> <p>2) victims to tell and seek adult support</p> <p>3) bullies to change their behaviour</p> <p>4) bystanders to intervene</p> <p>5) encouragement of positive relationships</p>
MTAs' views on	<p>They valued the stricter approaches adopted by certain teachers</p> <p>Felt that teachers saw them as 'mums that help and get paid for it.'</p>	<p>They needed more support, increased status and training.</p>	<p>Not considered in their interview.</p>

As mentioned previously Ms James responded positively initially to the strategy of dealing with bullying '*when it happens*' (Int 1), before a more negative demeanour prevailed later. Then she talked of a concern that there were no consistent approaches employed and that her pleas to pupils to ignore teasing were proving ineffective. Similarly Mr Hogan felt that '*we recognise it, yet nothing has been done*', (Int 1) although his frustration may have been linked to his isolation from the mainstream of thinking amongst the staff, especially Mr Benjamin. Concord may have been an aspiration but there was evidence that there were areas of disagreement and practice deemed as ineffective. Superficially there was a feeling that bullying was handled well and dealt with on an individual basis.

Mrs Adams: *I know we are all aiming for the same thing and we have probably got similar standards about what is acceptable and what isn't, but what we have got is similar strategies for dealing with behaviour* (Int 2).

The word 'probably' betrayed a doubt that was confirmed by another member of staff.

Miss Robins: *I know that there's one member of staff who seems to totally negate what we do. ... there's not the consistency ... and with something like bullying you have to be consistent, so that children know the limits and boundaries* (Int 1).

The key issues here were punishment and that teachers possess the potential to abuse their power gained through size and status. Highly punitive approaches and extensive use of power gained through position ran counter to the principles and practices of many of the thoughtful teachers of Nicholas Street School. One even considered her demeanour and teaching style.

Ms Alexander: *I have to really stay on the ball in terms of my own attitude and how I am treating the children and if I find myself bullying I will stop and make a point of talking to the children about what I have done. ... I think raising consciousness about bullying means that all sorts of issues of one's own practice come out.*
(Int 1)

Misgivings regarding punitive approaches were to be found elsewhere. Ms James wanted children to behave, not through fear of the consequences, but because of its intrinsic merits (Int 1), yet there were also pressures to punish. In common with many of her peers, Lorraine had disclosed a degree of outrage about bullying, which often translated into a tone of desire for punishment of perpetrators. Mr Yates discerned such an expectation, seemingly confusing punishment with intervention.

Mr Yates: *They really want someone punished and by instinct I am not someone who punishes I don't generally go for the punitive reaction, unless I actually see physical violence taking place in which case I go in very quickly and try to stop it.* (Int 1)

Despite the creation of multifaceted definitions of bullying, I was becoming more aware that physical violence invited more adult sanction based approaches since physical acts provided stark and often clear evidence of a bullying action. However, the more intricate forms, such as social exclusion, saw staff look to more subtle forms of intervention or none at all. The danger in such differentiation had been evident when Ms Alexander called Robin a 'bully' for a single, physical act against Julie, who had consistently berated Robin and had done so for a long time.

Mr Hogan was considered openly by one member of staff, and I sensed Mr Benjamin, as not adhering to a supposed prevailing philosophy of thoughtful and individual approaches. Nevertheless a caution concerning being over-reactive was a key feature in his avowed technique, but punitive approaches remained on the agenda:

Mr Hogan: *It is a case of talking to the children in a more non threatening way to elicit information from them rather than say I'm going to go into punishment mode right from the start. (Int 1)*

This was not the impression others had given me and I felt that, either he did not understand how his ideas were perceived by others, or that I was hearing what he felt I should hear. He elaborated on his ambition to be non-judgmental:

Mr Hogan: *You actually try to keep yourself as a neutral observer or a neutral person to find out what's happening.*

CL: *A seeker of truth?*

Mr Hogan: *Yes.*

There appeared to be two motives for the search for truth. First, it established an evidence base that may be required if an incident involved parents and second, it confirmed that there was a truth to be found with a probable corollary of a guilty party and an innocent one. Lorraine and others had illustrated how much what had happened in a bullying incident could be a matter of perception and that who would be cast as bully or victim was problematic, except in the case of Edward.

Whilst seeing the value of the truth in terms of managing an incident, Mrs Barnes recognised that *'it's hard to know ... the truth ...you don't know if they are telling the truth'* (Int 2). She described how a boy in her class had failed to admit to what she determined as being bullying and certainly constituted a minor physical assault. Eventually he had confessed which she deemed as sufficient and no punishment ensued. *'For me it would be more important to get an acknowledgement of "yes I've hurt that person"'* (Int 2). She spoke of a need for the bully to be treated positively. *'As long as the bully understands that what he is doing is wrong and you are helping him because he is doing wrong'* (Int 2).

Throughout this part of the analysis I recalled how often pupils, including Lorraine, had wanted their truth to be known and justice to prevail. A search for facts concerned Mr Yates who talked of conversations with pupils as attempts to elicit *'their versions'* and he expressed a desire to see *'where the child is coming from'* (Int 1). He added that he *'was not interested in establishing the facts'* but ensuring that pupils discussed events and utilised the conversation to express their feelings in front of the other person. Later he embraced the idea of varying perspectives on an event. *'Generally I take it as read that there are two sides to the story and they are probably different'* (Int 2). The revelation of feelings and the rejection of the pursuit of the truth are key tenets of Robinson and Maines's (1997) 'No-Blame Approach' and here Mr Yates appeared to be drawing upon these principles, although not deploying any formal elements and structure.

With the literature extolling parents to inform schools having gathered 'facts' about the problems (Lawson, 1994), part of any expectation to glean facts and to punish might be

generated from outside the school. For Mrs Fashin ascertaining versions of events was as much a self-preservation response to potential pressure from parents.

Mrs Fashin: *In my experience ... the child goes home, talks to the parents, the parents want to know exactly what has happened and I need to say to them, 'Yes I am professional enough to have followed that incident up and this is how I dealt with it'. (Int 2)*

Within the staff were advocates of counselling based approaches that centred on perpetrators:

Mrs Adams: *Not necessarily the child that's being bullied, if it's a different child each time then that child, each child has got to be helped in the same way. Whereas the bully has to be helped more and more as time goes on. (Int 1)*

She continued with '*the bully needs help rather punishment*'. She was the only member of staff who expressed a wish to know more about strategies that would enhance her ability to cope with situations, adding that children need to be taught how to deal with low level teasing.

Both Ms James and Mr Yates concentrated on the victim and on early intervention.

Mr Yates: *When kids say 'people have been calling me names' I will talk to them about how that feels and what we can do in return and, maybe, how we can avoid that happening again. In a way I suppose I am giving them strategies to deal with incidents like that. (Int 1)*

He offered a mixture of counselling followed by enhancing of skills that increased their capacity to cope (Mellor, 1997) and their power to resist. It could be argued that they

possessed a right not to be bullied no matter how apparently powerless or how 'different' they seemed, therefore to ask them to change might be construed as a compromise of such a right.

Staff spoke of their open approach to dealing with incidents at classroom level management, occasionally through 'circle time' that was followed by more personal conversations with those directly involved. The transparency with which incidents were apparently dealt with rested uneasily with Lorraine's and some of her peers' reluctance to be seen as a 'dobber'. Teachers aimed to construct an atmosphere which facilitated openness, but not all pupils wished, or were able, to take advantage of it, despite encouragement from parents.

Throughout analysis of data from parents I was aware that their children's experience of bullying influenced responses and would certainly inform their perception of how the school coped with situations. There was little doubt that the majority of those who volunteered to support the research did so because they had a story to tell. 12 questionnaire respondents related that their children had been bullied, although none stated that their children had been perpetrators and, from interviewees, there were a small number who confessed that their children had been involved as perpetrators or had been bullied.

Mrs Sparrow, Lorraine's mother, had found the school to be open to her approaches and the teachers willing to listen, if not always able to respond to her satisfaction. Other parents stated that they experienced a mixed reaction to reported bullying with some staff portrayed as more helpful than others. Mrs Brambling said she knew that peer aggression had caused her son to become unhappy at school and she had discussed this with all her son's teachers, but it was not

until they met the Headteacher that they received confirmation that it was considered to be bullying. My thoughts returned inexorably to matters of definition. I reflected that it may have required the stamp of those with authority before an emotive term such as 'bullying' could be invoked and that it was not simply a matter of semantics. I was reminded of Gomm's (1997, p.137) view that 'to empower someone else implies something which is granted by someone more powerful to someone who is less powerful.'

Other parents echoed Mr Benjamin's significance. Initial contact with the school was usually with the class teacher, but the Headteacher was often involved early in proceedings and there was a consensus that he was pivotal. This was based on his power, status and credibility, part of which stemmed from parents' knowledge that he spent time on the playground, where they believed most of bullying took place.

Mrs Finch: *Mr Benjamin was very definite, he saw me, he saw the boys together and then he used a slight lever with not seeing the other boy's parents.*

Mrs Kite: *Mrs Richards has been absolutely surrounded and sometimes Mr Benjamin has seemed more approachable ... I know he is probably a lot busier.*

Mrs Lark: *Mr Benjamin is a lot better. He has always really been the contact within the school.*

Over reliance, even dependence, on the power of the Headteacher carried potential tensions. First, this research has demonstrated that bullying usually took place between fellow class pupils or pupils in the same year group indicating the centrality of the class teacher rather than the Headteacher. Second, it released teachers from developing skills in dealing with pupil conflicts, implying that solutions rested elsewhere. In effect passing the task to Mr Benjamin

imparted a message that only his intervention provided solutions with the potential disempowering effect on both pupils and their teachers.

The most negative experience related in interviews was Mrs Finch's account of being informed by Mr Yates that their son, Terry, '*comes in looking like a victim*' and '*needs to lose the badge before we can do anything about this.*' This advice was unhelpful and just fell short of their son appearing to invite bullying. If being powerless forms part of a victim profile, then they also may not possess the power to remove such a 'badge'. If Mr Yates account had been accurate then the way the provocation was raised had done little to ameliorate the situation. In contrast, an encouraging finding was that none of the parents reported pupils feeling bullied, intimidated or demeaned by any of the teachers, which was an experience that Pervin (1995) found in his research.

Parents' questionnaire responses (Appendix 32) on how well the school dealt with matters revealed a mixed reaction. Where the school was perceived as successful it was based upon experience, speed of action and acknowledgement of the gravity of the situation. There was some criticism, but phrases such as 'tend to' and 'seem to' hinted at a lack of certainty.

The teachers, instead of clamping down immediately, tend to wait for a couple of occasions just to ensure they are right. (3)

Because they seem to wait and see how the situation develops instead of taking immediate action. (12)

Further criticism centred on not being strict enough (5) and the need for more discipline (9) with an example of the '*child ... was only isolated from other children for one playtime*' (6)

being provided. Interspersed with occasional celebratory comments (8 and 14) were that *'they listen but don't always act'* (13) adding again that it was parental intervention that inspired action and that *'...teachers tend to act on the parent's complaint but not always when children go to them for help'* (13).

There appeared to be a dilemma for the teachers who placed emphasis on non-punitive, patient approaches to bullying problems encountering parents seeking, even demanding, punitive reactions. In addition, this small sample had produced such a diversity of response, including indications of ignorance of any form of school policy, that there appeared a need for increased involvement and awareness raising with parents, no matter how transparent the anti-bullying policy appeared to certain staff.

In the case of the pupils I was concerned to determine to whom pupils turned, or would consider turning to, in the event of their being bullied knowing that many pupils would supplement their choice of support with the reasoning behind it. Advice in literature for young people often emphasises a need to tell (Bryant-Mole, 1992), but children may find it difficult to relate their experience and hurt to others. This appeared to be a rarity at Nicholas Street and I was struck by the willingness to be open amongst most pupils. Interviews revealed that there were those who would tell anyone available (Charles, Linda and Sam), one who would not tell anyone (Lorraine) and those who offered a range of potential listeners, including class teachers, staff on playground duty, the Headteacher, MTAs, friends and parents.

Two class teachers, Ms James and Ms Alexander, were first choices for several of their pupils. This was not always related to personality or power but to aspects such as proximity and position, encapsulated by Andrea's '*because she is my teacher.*' Only three pupils, Wasim, Martin and Rhiannon, selected a teacher other than their own class teacher or the Headteacher. Wasim's experience of apparent racial taunts led him towards Mr Hogan and Rhiannon, having initially stated that she would '*sit down in a huddle and sulk*', also selected Mr Hogan. In making her choice, she implied that not all teachers responded effectively.

Rhiannon: *I'd tell the teacher that would most deal with it, sort of Mr Hogan or someone like that he is more strict.'*

Here again was evidence that the most authoritarian member of staff, the least popular with the majority of pupils and colleagues, was seen by some to possess a capacity to use authority and power effectively in dealing with bullying. From these pupils there was an acknowledgement that he would take action and it was augmented with an indication that punitive approaches were an expectation. Although Rhiannon's class teacher, Ms Alexander, would be understanding, she felt that more than sympathy was needed. I pursued the idea that, if both power and action were required, why not Mr Benjamin?

Rhiannon: *Cos he doesn't want to be bother with little things like this, like, he probably would, but I wouldn't like to go up to him and say I was being bullied cos it would be sort of embarrassing, cos when I told him, he'd ask me a question and I would be gobsmacked oh gosh what to say next.*

Both Mr Hogan and Mr Benjamin, the latter by virtue of his status, were the choices of Martin. The selection of Mr Hogan was again based on authority, since he was considered '*the strictest teacher in the whole school*' which, on enquiry, meant:

Martin: *If he sees you do anything wrong while he is on duty, he will shout at you, stand you by the wall, make you lose playtimes.*

Such methods were not compatible with those of most staff. However, teacher power and authority was a significant factor for a minority of pupils in dealing with incidents, seemingly because they had not experienced any real alternative. The potential dangers of the adoption of tough stances came to the fore when the placid Leanne launched into an unprompted criticism of Mr Hogan's style:

Leanne: *He isn't very nice. If I chose a teacher for my class I would definitely not choose him.*

CL: *Some of the children ... like him because he is strict.*

Leanne: *If you do the slightest thing wrong he will get in a real big temper.*

Leanne's observations were a reminder that, in dealing with bullying, adults may be perceived as nurturing that which they aim to counter. Her view was not a common response and, in contrast, the value of strictness was underlined by many pupils in Year 5 who endorsed authority based ways of handling bullying. Mr Yates, on the evidence of his pupils, had a range of ways of handling matters including rebuke, offering another chance, a counselling approach, being dismissive and being investigative.

- Kay:** *Mr Yates does it very well ... he sits down with the person who has bullied them and tries to find out why they bullied. He doesn't like to go over the top.*
- Jackie:** *Cyril now I hear you have been hitting and punching say Steve or something ... if you do that again I'm going to do something.*
- Brian:** *He just says it's not my problem it's yours.*
- Raymond:** *You have to tell him the story and then he goes and gets the other person involved, if he was involved with it and then he will say something like 'stand against the wall at playtime spend our playtime in the library doing work.'*

Mr Yates's eclectic approaches could have been either a testimony to his capacity to match the gravity of the situation with ways of dealing with matters or simply inconsistency. Nonetheless, amidst these individual commentaries were those which emphasised his strictness and its deemed effectiveness.

- Billy:** *I don't really like strict teachers, but soft ones don't really tell you, get into your head ... I'm not doing that again I'm scared.*

The majority of pupils of Nicholas Street looked to their teachers to resolve bullying problems, often based more on retribution than recognition of wrong doing and preparedness to change. The various approaches that the teachers themselves conveyed were rarely discussed with the pupils and it was left to the more authoritarian stances to become noticed and deemed effective. Much of their power was achieved through status, or perhaps gender, ie the observed association of strictness and the two male class teachers. Those non-teaching staff who patrolled the playground and who represented the teachers possessed neither of these supposed advantages.

Meal Time Assistants (MTAs)

Mrs Nightingale: *I've done the odd relief of dinner ladies and it's just absolute chaos, you know.*

My aspirations at the formative stage of the research were to gather data from sources beyond the three main groups that eventually became contributors. Classroom ancillaries were omitted at the request of Mr Benjamin. The MTAs, who supervised the two shifts for lunch in the dining hall and the playground during the lunch hour, agreed to participate as a group rather than as individuals, without offering reasons. The result was a conversation (Appendix 33) with all but one, Jackie, who had been unable to make the meeting, but added her data in the form of a letter. Both Jackie and the group painted a bleak picture of their role in relation to playground actions considered as bullying, although I was aware that they were using the process to express frustration about their experiences. Following an outline of the ethics protocol, the group interview was conducted on a basis that it was legitimate to disagree with whatever was being put forward by any individual and that the only comment that went beyond the interview room would be in this thesis.

The group conveyed a uniformity that can be distilled as feeling low in status, not communicated with and lacking in training. They valued the more authoritarian, sanction based methods employed by teaching staff and were not sympathetic towards dealing with bullies other than harshly. They felt that both teachers and children did not consider them to be 'staff' but *'Mums that help and get paid for it'* and that, consequently, it had an impact on their ability to deal with situations in which they felt that they were *'only'* dinner ladies. Here then was a group that possessed neither the power nor the status to employ the adult based

strategies that they championed and so they looked to others to embrace their ideals. I was left with an impression that their desire for authoritarian methods was based upon their lack of guidance and awareness of alternatives and that they were frustrated.

Jackie's views amounted to a list of recent experiences of what she considered as bullying.

They included:

- a group of pupils 'running wild' in a classroom on a 'wet dinner play';
- 'gangs of friends' picking on individuals within the gang;
- taking the younger children's 'pods' or marbles;
- excluding pupils from the skipping game;
- play fighting that turns to real fighting;
- dinner-line fights breaking out.

All of which testified to a broad definition of bullying and contrasted with my observations of playtimes as essentially positive experiences, yet her passion and concern led me to consider her views as significant. When she related that if a child is *'rather large or wearing slightly out of date clothes, one child will seem to gather up a gang to pick on this one child,'* the experiences of Edward and Kevin came to mind. Her listing of events was in written form and the conversation that followed my thanking her for her reply, indicated that she was unhappy about pupil behaviour and she echoed the idea of a lack of skills in dealing with situations.

Interspersed with comments relating the significance of breaktime in school and its potential connection with bullying were vehement negative statements from teachers about MTAs.

They were perceived as a major obstacle to effective management. Strong terms such as *'hopeless'* were elaborated upon by their poor *'interactions'*, *'knee jerk reactions'* (Ms James) and the *'Achilles' Heel'* (Mr Hogan). There were occasional acknowledgements of their lack of training and a need for more support from the school. Mrs Richards recognised that the ratio of pupils to MTAs left most children to set their own boundaries and rules *'and other children may not feel that those rules or boundaries apply to them'* (Int 1). As many were also parents of pupils at the school, Mrs Saunders saw conflicting roles influencing how incidents were handled, *'we'll turn a blind eye, I'm not saying always, but I have seen it happen or ... where their child does something it's immediately they over-compensate'* (Int 1). Mrs Penfold's sympathy for MTAs emerged through her perceptions of a need to be mutually supportive and transmit skills from teachers to the wider team since *'the dinner ladies are not as aware of things as maybe the staff are'* (Int 2).

Mr Hogan, for whom the MTAs had considerable respect, was more strident and he launched into a condemnation of the school's management of this group.

Mr Hogan: *We don't train them ... we don't give them enough support. We don't give them strategies to deal with situations they should be brought in on a strategy for dealing with it in the school and I think we have all said this. We recognise it but nothing has been done* (Int 2).

So many tensions were within this short statement from Mr Hogan. There was the clamour for training based on strategies that he suggested were missing. Such training had been found to have had a positive impact in helping MTAs to distinguish between playful and aggressive

fighting (Boulton, 1994). However I felt that his cry that '*nothing has been done*' was also an expression of his personal frustration. Such was his own distance from the majority of staff thinking that I often sensed that I was being told that all the staff were out of step with his views or that he spoke for all, when it was just himself. On the need for more support and training, it was hard not to agree with him, although it begged questions about who would undertake the training and what ideas or theories underpin it.

As with certain teachers, parents felt limited understanding for an underpaid group tackling a complex problem entwined with a perceived inefficiency and deficit in training. Questionnaires revealed criticism, often severe in tone, centred upon MTAs being seen as largely ignoring matters plus a degree of sympathy (Appendix 34). The failings of this group were mitigated in individual responses by either the lack of training or inadequacies concerning the role or size of the task that was being required of them. Yet again there appeared to be a clear tension arising from whether MTAs should employ their power, such as it was, and those who considered their role as liaison with more powerful groups, ie the teachers. Two respondents felt unqualified to offer a view, further enhancing my growing opinion that what was lacking was explicit clarity about role and expectation.

Ignoring an incident may not be the same as being ignorant of it and Mr and Mrs Avocet, in their interview, recalled a lunchtime bullying behaviour involving their son, which duty staff could not have failed to notice. They elected to by-pass the MTAs and moved straight to Mr Benjamin. In another incident, Mrs Goldcrest, talking of the violence suffered by her son, stated that her child elected not to inform MTAs, which was as much a reluctance to tell on

peers as a lack of faith in supervisors. Another parent presumed the existence of a communication system that was not formalised and that I could not identify. *'I assume the MTAs mention it to the class teacher and from there it goes to Mr Benjamin'* (Mrs Eagle). All the above added to a picture of confusion, frustration and maybe neglect, which was replicated in the analysis of the pupil's views.

The questionnaire invited children to indicate whether MTAs 'could do more to help' and, if they thought that to be the case, to suggest what might be done (Appendix 35). Responses ranged from the derisory to acknowledgement of their need for enhanced skills and resources. As with the teaching staff, pupils were occasionally strident in their condemnation of the total lack of impact or skills to the point that the MTAs appeared not to care. Within this group were children who described their ineffectiveness in differing ways including concentration on fighting and collecting rubbish. The phrase that characterised this inability was the frequently employed *'all they do is'*. Where there were pleas for improved communication they seemed as much a comment on the dismissive nature of the MTAs as a perceived lack of interpersonal skills possessed by them.

MTAs, through their lack of skills and status, were seen as needing supplementary power, but seemingly only from Mr Benjamin. None of the pupils mentioned other teachers, perhaps reflecting a desire for a less interventionist role from them in playground incidents or recognizing that it was Mr Benjamin who consistently patrolled the playground. Regarding minority positions there was recognition that they were under-resourced and there were also

calls for a change in attitude. Within these was a contradiction, with a request for MTAs to be both '*nicer*' and '*stricter*'.

Interviews revealed a duplicate negative picture, confirming that pupils dismissed MTAs as powerless and usually inefficient. They were reliant upon requiring involved pupils to stand against 'the wall', reprimanding them to little effect or, if an incident was considered serious enough, writing names of perpetrators in the 'book'. They were incapable of administering tough methods or they conveyed a dismissive air.

Garry: *She just said you stop doing that. I think they done it for 5 minutes more and then they stopped.*

Leanne: *They will just say sit down but they won't do much about it. I know that there is nothing that you can really do.*

Melanie: *I think they are a bit hopeless at sorting things out.*

Barbara: *They are rubbish. They don't do anything ... they will just say 'stay away' from them and that's it. They will go off and talk to another dinner lady. It's like they don't care. No matter what happens they won't do anything about it.*

Kay: *I think the dinner ladies don't deal with it very well because when ... someone has been bullied and someone tells them what's happened they just tell them off and say if that happens again you will be by the wall ... I think they are too nice about it.*

Despite being marginal in terms of the data gathering, this group were key players for those who construe bullying as a playground activity or, like myself, believe that the bullying may be acted out in recreation times, despite being developed or nurtured at any time in the school

day. Pupils at Nicholas Street School felt that these poorly paid monitors were more than lacking in skills, status and power since they could be dismissive, even uncaring. This meant that there was little celebration of their performance and the MTAs themselves related a story of disempowerment in the face of bullying situations that ranged from frustration to fear. They were a group for whom the deficiency in performance, whilst rooted in their negligible power, was also related to lack of clear policy on bullying and the development of skills that support such a policy. MTAs felt no ownership - perhaps there was nothing to own.

The Pupils

At the time of the gathering of the data, and as a resultant influence of the case study of Lorraine, I was aware that the school did not appear to have considered whether pupils themselves could be instrumental in dealing with events. Pupils had not been reported as being involved in resolving conflict (Ross, 1996) and mediating disputes between pupils (Smith and Sharp, 1994). Several teachers made reference to using 'circle time' as a regular part of their classroom management procedures and they connected this technique with their anti-bullying strategies. During interviews teachers saw it as their responsibility to manage incidents and rarely looked to the potential of providing pupils with the skills to respond to bullying incidents. Conversations about peer mediation and other forms of pupil involvement were only initiated by myself, when it appeared opportune to do so. Insecurities surrounding empowering pupils were exemplified by Mrs Fashin's reserved embrace of peer mediation.

Mrs Fashin: *It depends on the nature of what is going on. If, as teachers we are, not hesitant, unsure sometimes of the way to handle things, is it possible that 9, 10 and 11 year olds can mediate? I think it's fine and I would like to see it happening in certain incidents but some may be so serious that an adult needs to be there – maybe.*

This proved to be as positive an endorsement of pupils playing a role in dealing with matters as I was to find amongst teachers and I felt that nothing that I had heard about or observed had been so serious that they would not have benefited from skilled pupil involvement.

As far as MTAs were concerned I never had the opportunity to introduce ideas of pupil involvement and given their own feelings of being dependent on teacher status and power, such ideas would have proved a radical departure from their thinking.

The major source of information about pupil empowerment came from their questionnaire. Asked whether pupils could have done more to help and what that might have been, a range of imaginative answers ensued (Appendix 36). In the case of advice for recipients of bullying a single call to '*defend themselves*' (508) stood out from the majority view of ignoring the attentions of the bully. Advice to invoke the help of adults focussed predictably on teachers, although there was a single mention of MTAs. Few suggestions for aggressors went beyond a request to stop. Potential encouragement for the school was that the thinking of the pupils stepped beyond a focus on the involved and looked at the broader school population. Where respondents looked to the non-involved or the 'bystanders', both victim and bully were seen as being potential beneficiaries and they were also seen as supporting teachers and even

undertaking a policing role. All the responses that were not about involved pupils were from the older Year 6 groups suggesting that a maturational factor may have been present.

A challenging aspect for the school was the variety of advice given by parents on how children might conduct themselves. Asked how pupils could do more to help themselves, parents' questionnaire replies fell into three groups (Appendix 37). First, there were pleas to inform adults, usually teachers, with one comment, '*pupils should be taught to tell their teachers as soon as an incident has happened*' (10) emphasising that there were curriculum implications and that the power to 'tell' was not a simple skill that all children possessed. Data from pupils drew attention to the inability of particular pupils to tell and that it was pointless if it exacerbated the problem or was not acted upon. In contrast, the second group looked to pupils, be they bullies or bystanders, to make a difference '*by taking responsibility for their actions and the effect it has upon the feelings of others*' (14). A third group adopted a moral stance, '*children need to know to bully is wrong*' (1) and there was no elaboration on how children acquire such knowledge, perhaps it was assumed that it was the responsibility of teachers.

Interviews exposed a further challenge for the school was the existence, albeit limited, of a call for retaliation considered by Lawson (1994) as a last resort.

Mr Heron: *We have told her ... if somebody attacks you they must expect you to defend yourself, so do it. You are allowed to defend yourself, every school says that - you don't have to just lie down and get kicked, you must be prepared to defend yourself because at that point nobody is.*

Self-defence occasionally emerged from the variety of ideas and opinions offered by parents and, in this case, Mr Heron's view conveyed little understanding of the disempowerment felt by victims and for the ineffectiveness of counter aggression, as illustrated by Edward and Kevin, for whom it merely served to underline their impotence to prevent bullying.

The dichotomy of whether to adopt self-defence or walk away was illustrated when Mrs Avocet recalled a discussion with a friend. *'I have told him to tell his teacher, not to do anything, walk away ... and she (the friend) said I brought my kids up with the fact, if they were thumped, they thump back.'* There was a recognition of the difficulties in standing up to bullies by Mrs Jay, whilst Mr Nightingale advised non-involvement and departure from the scene.

Mrs Jay: *I think they shouldn't stand outside. I think they should speak up and say 'oi' to the person, but I don't think children do.*

Mr Nightingale: *Just stay out of the way, walk away from it, it's not worth it.*

Divergent views, such as those above, underline the complexity of the task facing schools when advising children and parents about responding to bullying. Given the limitations on schools regarding forms of punishment, they have been almost compelled to adopt approaches that avoided 'fanning the flames' and this has the potential to promote frustration among some parents, who believe that countering bullying demands violent reaction.

Summary

The older pupils of Nicholas Street School had demonstrated a breadth of responses to many of the issues addressed in exploring ways of handling bullying situations. They may well have provided an opportunity for the school to go forward. This study demonstrates that pupils of the school had not been empowered by current policy and practices of the anti-bullying strategies, which had been largely centred on two key elements. First, the Cluster group policy, an imposed set of ideas from powerful members of the educational community, had made little impact. In its attempt to cultivate a consistency it conveyed that bullying policy was a paper exercise that had been completed with a minimum of fuss. No ownership of the ideas within the documents went beyond the headteachers and few of the teachers, parents or pupils perceived it to be significant. There had been no follow-up identified. Second, central to many teachers' thinking, was the idea that all cases of bullying would be treated individually. Laudable though this approach was, in that it recognised the breadth of experience that was being defined as bullying, it resulted in the issue receiving little formal attention and staff remained untrained and unaware of potential ways of handling matters. The caring ethos of the school and the thoughtful nature of the teachers were not sufficient for the pupils, and many adults, to discern a positive, transparent, effective stance against bullying.

Chapter Five: CONCLUSIONS

- 1: Review of the research process**
- 2: Summary of findings and impact on thinking and professional practice.**
 - a) On giving pupils responsibility and power**
 - b) On the defining problem**
 - c) On incidence levels**

The conclusion to this thesis includes recommendations that are tempered with acknowledgement of the limitations of and opportunities presented by case study.

5:1 Review of the research process

Retrospectively I have examined my research against Creswell's (1998) characteristics of 'good' qualitative study. He speaks of a need for multiple forms of data collection and time spent in the field, both of which were features of this study. In the case of the latter, the extended time spent on the school playground and in classrooms proved to be a valuable source of information. It served to enhance my relationship with participants and gave me insights into the context, both of which were immeasurable, yet beneficial.

Cresswell (1998, pp.20-21) lists the characteristics and assumptions of qualitative enquiry such as evolving design, 'presentation of multiple realities' and the researcher as an instrument

of data collection. Certainly those from whom data were gathered had their perspectives, sometimes as individuals and sometimes as a group, from which I was able to generate categories, meaning and structure. The concept of the researcher as an instrument of data collection steps beyond my role as an interviewer and designer of questionnaires and examines my values and assumptions. My inductive analysis of the data cannot be separated from my value position or the words that I write as a result. I have concluded that what is presented here is many layers away from the stories of the participants in the school and has become my version of their realities. From their perceptions came my recording, followed by the interaction between analysis and selection and onto writing, which is then, in turn, interpreted by the reader. My conclusions were my notions of the plausible but, as Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.171) advocate, they were ‘provisional ... never established forever; their very nature allows for endless elaboration and partial negation (qualification).’

Creswell (1998) also highlights the need for a single focus or problem. I believe that this case study has as its focus an exploration of an single phenomenon (bullying), in a given context both of culture (Nicholas Street school) and time (middle to late 1990’s) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

We are confronting a universe marked by tremendous fluidity; it won’t and can’t stand still. It is a universe where fragmentation, splintering and disappearance are the mirror images of appearance, emergence, and coalescence. This is a universe where nothing is strictly determined.

(Strauss, 1978, p.123)

Such an idea of transience links with Creswell's idea of the need for verification and, to that end, I feel a degree of frustration for, although I have sought multiple perspectives through differing methods and over an extensive period of time, circumstances have prevented complete fulfilment of my aspirations. Second interviews and opportunities to discuss transcripts of a previous interview led to a degree of member checks, but there has been no verification of my account from the school, nor could there be now as Nicholas Street has a new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and some new staff. I shall return to the school to offer a summary of my findings and these will build on initial ideas that I fed back at the conclusion of the data-gathering phase. However, the culture and time will be different and the teachers will be compelled to abstract that which is of contemporary relevance to them (Stake, 1995). I too will have moved on in my thinking.

Other indicators of successful qualitative research cited by Creswell include the clarity of writing, ideas that are unexpected and also a sense of 'being there', 'verisimilitude', and, although these were my aims, the decision about their achievements or otherwise rests with the reader.

Finally, Creswell (1998, p.21) identifies the need for a tradition of enquiry acknowledging that the 'tradition need not be "pure" and one might mix procedures from several.' This has been an ethnographic case study with emphasis upon real relationships in a set context. As stated in Chapter 3, I have not sought to locate the research within a single paradigm, but have positioned my approach at the end of Hammersley's (1996, p.160) continuum where quantitative and qualitative methods are 'complementary' and the notion of suitability was

paramount. The data have been largely qualitative, but statistics have been used to illustrate or emphasise.

The thesis has been as much about methods employed to conduct research into the complex and sensitive subject of bullying as it is about the subject itself. Inevitably reflection on the research leads to consideration of methods and processes that appeared to work and those which could have been different or omitted. The time spent with teachers and pupils building relationships and subsequent trust was crucial as it licensed asking frank questions and meant that answers were likely to be honest.

In terms of the methods employed to gather data, questionnaires provided a richness in the reasoning behind answers given for boxes ticked and left an impression that children and parents were willing, maybe needed, to write about their negative experiences. The questionnaires were too limiting for certain pupils who had extensive stories to tell, a few of whom took the opportunity to do so in the space provided. My future research in this area will still include questionnaires, but with increased opportunities to respond to scenarios and to write about matters at length. The choice of scenarios is based upon the perceived success of the Definition 'game' and the enthusiasm generated for the task by the children. Although it would have not provided particularly valid data, I wish that I had employed it with the staff and parents, more as a stimulus to discussion than as an analytic tool. Such was the depth of discussion that it often stimulated in the pupils that I have developed a second version, with fewer scenarios, which

- a) starts with a single sentence description of an event that will be categorised;
- b) invites the decision to categorise an event as ‘definitely bullying’, ‘could be bullying’ or ‘not bullying’. Key points from discussion and reasoning behind the choice are noted;
- c) includes further information;
- d) invites a confirmation or change of the previous decision. Key points from discussion and reasoning behind the choice are noted;
- e) repeats c) and d);
- f) general discussion about the scenario (key points from discussion and reasoning are noted).

Such a process invites participants to consider that additional information can lead to changes in perception and serves to underline the complexity of definition. It brings into focus the value stances employed and that attributing a label such as ‘bullying’ can often be little more than a matter of interpretation.

As for interviews I particularly enjoyed the thoughtful deliberations of the staff in second interviews as they reflected on and wrestled with their ideas from the hard copy of the initial interview. I was also impressed with the honesty of the pupils in relating their own involvement, although they seemed less willing to talk about others. Any further research would still employ a similar style of relaxed, not overly scripted interviews that permitted pausing and interaction with the interviewer. What proved central to the quality and quantity of data gathered was a balance between challenging and nurturing participants as they

revealed their ideas and experiences and always seeking to be non-judgmental, prepared to listen and facilitating through appropriate prompting. These skills were fine-tuned as the research developed and proved to be a learning experience that would inform similar forms of data gathering.

5:2 Summary of findings and impact on thinking and professional practice.

In drawing together the main themes from this research I shall stray into a more generalised discussion on the implications that my findings may have for both adults and children in primary schools. Throughout the data analysis and write up phases of this thesis I have been involved in extensive work on countering bullying in schools with teachers, parents and pupils (Appendix 38). Inevitably the issue has engaged my thoughts, many of which are encapsulated in the book (Lee, 2001) that I was recently commissioned to write for schools by a Local Education Authority and which has been inserted within the bindings of this thesis.

Among ideas that have been strongly influenced by the thesis were that:

- 1) Many of the scenarios from the 'game' raised questions that inform discussion and debate eg when Karl was called 'thicky' behind his back is he being hurt, albeit indirectly? This invites all parties to consider that victims may not become so only by direct action, but that they may be created by negative statements that are never heard by the child. Therefore it may be that victims can be created within a system, not just by the direct actions of bullies.

- 2) Schools, even those with thoughtful, caring staff, can reside at a low level of engagement with the topic of bullying. The case study school had little more than a policy about which they were ambivalent, negative or ignorant. At worst it appeared possible to create a school system that nurtured and condoned bullying.

- 3) Pupils in the school were prepared to talk openly about *the issue* of bullying, even if discussing their own involvement was not always as easy. They are a repository of sophisticated thoughts and ideas and their involvement is paramount in generating policy and practice that counters any inertia that may exist. In the book I included a questionnaire that had been devised, distributed and analysed by a Year 9 group in a secondary school as an example of the opportunities for pupil involvement. Whatever the form of research, be it ‘insider’ or via an external agency, the school needs to feel a sense of ownership (Arnold, 1994) and declare a willingness to consider findings. To do anything less devalues the significance of both the bullying issue and the research.

The above are exemplars of the influence of the thesis on my thinking and, it is hoped, the practice of others. They are not a synopsis of all my findings, but are illustrative of the impact of the research on practice.

a) On giving pupils responsibility and power

To begin a more detailed summation I should like to return to the third point above. I have concluded that, of the categories of post-event management developed in Chapter Two, it is

those which place responsibility and hopefully positive power with pupils, ie the 'pupil democratic', that are more likely to have a long-term impact. Through analysis of the accounts of the pupils I concluded that motivation to tease or bully was a further significant issue. The desire to gain attention may provoke particular children into bullying others. This implies that dealing with bullying cannot be confined to the restricted reference groups of bullies and victims and underlines the importance of not perceiving solutions solely based upon immediate participants.

The impact of peer pressure groups in determining interactions and relationships in the informal culture of the school has been documented and there has been acknowledgement of the need for a supportive 'audience' as part of the process of securing membership of the group (Cullingford and Morrison, 1997). The significance of the peer group cannot be underestimated since Pepler and Craig (1995) observed that the overwhelming majority of episodes of bullying took place in the presence of peers and Salmivalli et al (1997) noted that between a third and half of incidents take place within a friendship network. Smith et al (1999, p.282), in examining why the reporting of being bullied declined as pupils reached around 15 years old, concluded that 'schools will have an uphill struggle' with pupils aged between 9 and 14 years of age, possibly reflecting a 'greater distancing from adult/teacher values.' If this is the case then imposed policy of the type evident at Nicholas Street, would appear to be of little value in comparison to nurturing the insights, understanding and skills of pupils. If Sutton (2001, p.533) is correct in his belief that 'interventions need to work out how to make it as uncool to be a bully as it is to be a swot, a telltale or a victim', then the attitudes and beliefs of those who determine that which is 'uncool', ie the pupils, would appear pivotal.

The children who contributed to this research had no formal say in how bullying was dealt with and were dependent upon adults for solutions. Only by being involved at every level can such pupils move beyond the passivity of their role and assume responsibility and more positive power. Edward, Lorraine and Kevin all looked to teachers for support and received little from their peers, as little was the expectation.

Enhancing self-esteem may also link with the subject of the role of peers. There appears to be substantial evidence of low feelings of self-worth and self-esteem amongst those pupils who have been victimised at school (Callaghan and Joseph, 1995; Sharp, 1995). It has also been proposed that boys who have bullied, and those who reported themselves as not being involved, may have similar high levels of self-esteem (Slee and Rigby, 1993a). However, in the case of the perpetrators, these levels may be maintained by the sense of power gained through bullying acts. Mrs Little's move towards defining the outcome of bullying in a broader social context (Section 4:2(i)) may reflect her appreciation that the motives behind bullying were not simply based on a perceived weakness in the victims, but that bullying had a wider purpose and that *the response from the others, or the response from the adult to them doing it, is the prime mover* (Int 2).

b) On the defining problem

Contemporary usage of the term 'bullying' would appear to be assuming a dynamic and it is now a term that applies to:

- a) a range of negative actions including social, emotional and psychological abuse;
- b) forms of abuse that occur beyond the realms of school.

I suggest that the term 'bullying' has become more liberally used which, if accurate, means that there may be pressure on schools to develop a common understanding between all key parties. Apart from its lack of impact, one of the consequences of the imposed paper definition from the headteachers (Appendix 17) was its remoteness from the pupils. It amounted to a powerful group imposing their comprehension of the term on others. I believe that any discussion of the term 'bullying' should include those closest to it, the pupils. It may well be that this does not lead to a resultant single definition, indeed it may be unnecessary, undesirable, even impossible, but the process of working towards one would make explicit the judgements and tensions that each group may well feel (Rigby, 1996). The journey that explores differences in meaning and shared viewpoints may be of more value to the school than any final product that embodies the standpoints of a variety of parties. No assumptions can be made about the 'watertightness' of any preordained or self-generated definitions and, if a final version were produced, it would require an addendum that stated that there may be other behaviours, experiences or relationships that did not correspond with the agreed version, but they could still be perceived as bullying. As a result of an exploration of understanding by children and adults, schools may move away from ever-refined definitions of bullying to clearer thinking and practice about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour.

Evidence presented from all three groups of participants challenges confidence in the assumption that 'bullying' was a term easily understood by those from whom information was

sought. There was a wide application of 'bullying' covering an array of forms of abuse or aggression and from a single action to long-standing relationships or something in between. Mr Yates was amongst those who attested to the idea that bullying was not a term that possessed clear parameters, and, as Galloway (1994, p.19) has pointed out, was 'not an all or nothing phenomenon.' Diversity of views represents an opportunity as well as a disadvantage. It is difficult not to conclude that considerable benefit would be derived from discussion of differences in meaning, for if all parties have disparate ways of describing and defining bullying, it renders the task of finding solutions to bullying problems a complex one.

The process of crafting definitions often seemed difficult for the teachers and second interviews occasionally involved revisiting the original to revise or affirm. They had a thoughtful approach to the defining process, searching for forms of words that embraced those key elements that fitted their personal construction. They offered contemplative, often less emotive proposals, than parents and pupils, which certainly might be expected, given the culture of the teaching profession and especially from this thoughtful sample. Like the parents, they employed all the major strands, but none emerged as predominant and there was no evidence of a sharing of views until, as a parting 'gift', I took the staff through the process of sharing their thoughts and we played the Definition 'game'. An agreed definition did not emerge, but an acknowledgement of the intricacy of the term 'bullying' and the need to share viewpoints did.

A limited number of teaching staff had conceptualised bullying as being a continuum. One writer who adopted such an approach was Floyd (1985, p.10) who, in discussing the

‘continuum of victimisation’, proposed a seven-stage process. At one end was teasing, leading on to blaming, ridicule, shaming, physical abuse, scapegoating and, finally, sacrifice. Such a model does not best describe the experience of the pupils at Nicholas Street for whom bullying was usually about social exclusion and teasing, but had serious consequences nonetheless. For some pupils a physical bullying act could be overcome with greater ease than one based on ridicule or exclusion.

Despite my reservations about the accuracy and use of definitions I believe that schools need a framework that facilitates the process of arriving at their own construction of what is meant by ‘bullying’. From my findings I have constructed a model of bullying amongst pupils based on their reported experience and interviews with all parties (Appendix 39). Drawing upon the notion of a continuum, at one end I would propose a ‘bullying action’, which can often be exploratory, in that the perpetrator seeks to generate a reaction and explore the potential for a response of the chosen victim. This was the kind of action that the teachers of the younger pupils noted and about which they occasionally showed a reluctance to use the term ‘bullying’. If successful in causing hurt, the perpetrators have begun the process of disempowering their victim. They have begun to explore, even establish, Olweus’s (1993, p.10) ‘asymmetric power relationship’ which becomes more entrenched the longer what has begun to turn into a ‘bullying relationship’ goes on. As bullying actions are repeated they become central to the relationship, indeed appear to determine it. With this model the strands help to distinguish where along that continuum a specific action might reside or how established the relationship has become, in terms of the ‘dynamic systems’ described in Chapter 2, how ‘stable’ it is (Pepler et al 1999). This continuum does not represent an

incontrovertible definition of bullying in itself, but is offered as a practical model designed to help teachers, pupils and other staff work towards conceptualising bullying in the context of their schools. As I have already stated, given the variety and forms of definition revealed throughout this thesis, I recognize that any definition, imposed or self-generated, would not fully embrace every action that adults and children deem as bullying.

The idea of the continuum also serves to assist in the development of a vocabulary to support children in distinguishing between bullying and other behaviours. I have used it with adults and children in schools and noted that both parties find this model has a resonance for them in that it informs discussion and debate and offers an easily remembered visual summary that incorporates the major strands.

The least deployed 'construct' (Appendix 2) that of 'provocation', rests uneasily with the concept of the continuum and I have come to recognise why it has been rarely employed in definitions. The case of Lorraine illustrated how talents, demeanour, even a powerful persona, may lead to others seeking to find or exploit what can also be potential weaknesses. Kevin's reactive nature was provocative, as was Edward's search for either positive or negative attention. All may have contributed to their experiences but to locate them along the continuum was problematic for provocation may have been an initial component, part of the ensuing, ongoing relationship or a consequence of it. Those who are charged with dealing with bullying might consider the degree to which victims provoked the actions of others and whether that provocation merited any negative action taken by the perpetrators.

A further definition problem for schools arises from a recent Internet site regarding bullying that adopted a highly inflexible stance with advice to parents that 'if your child says he/she is being bullied then he is being bullied' (Bullying Online, 2000, www.bullying.co.uk). Although I concur that any incident should be taken seriously and that negative relationships, bullying or otherwise, often benefit from sensitive adult intervention, I foresee dangers in this advice. It implies that the sole arbiter of whether bullying has taken place is the apparent victim and, as stated early (section 2:1(v)), it provides opportunities for false accusations. Lorraine's story, in itself, would indicate that this was both simplistic and problematic. It appears that the term 'bullying' has little meaning that is independent of the context of its usage. Who defines it and who applies those definitions might be more significant. The pupils had shown themselves to be no more consistent than their teachers in their definitions with *hurt* and *intention* to cause hurt informing much of their thinking and *persistence* and *repetition* appearing less significant than in the literature on the subject. Knowledge of children's understanding would appear to be significant, if not central, but, at Nicholas Street School, all parties existed in a world of mistaken assumed shared understanding and this could only have generated problems in discovering and dealing with incidents.

c) On incidence levels

As mentioned at the outset, the impression of Nicholas Street was not that of a school with a major bullying problem in quantitative terms. Lane (1992, p.142) has described incidence levels as an illustration of 'the mess that bullying research is in, with no consistent definitions being used in research studies, hence widely varying estimates occur.' In an attempt to permit

international comparison the Sheffield Project, Smith and Sharp (1994) drew upon the definition of bullying used in Norwegian studies, but there was little commentary on the intrinsic difficulties of definition-led research or upon the limitations of incidence levels. Such forms of describing the problem continue to exist in the latest documents (DfEE, 2000, p.12). The value of records of incidence may be that they provide data on 'before' and 'after' levels in appraising the efficacy or otherwise of specific intervention techniques and they demonstrate that bullying is, or is not, a widespread problem. They evaluate the apparent extent of the problem in quantitative terms, but reveal little about the context of the school, the feelings of stakeholders, the impact of a single incident or the presence of a single victim. The story of Edward revealed the importance of looking at individual cases, for despite *not* being nominated as a victim by all his classmates, his experiences of bullying were institutionalised within the class. It appeared that he experienced little that was positive in his interactions with others and, even pupils who did not appear to pick on anyone else saw Edward as 'fair game', and I sensed little embarrassment in any revelation of bullying him. However, in survey terms, he was but a single case.

Another factor that could have an impact on measuring incidence levels of bullying in a primary school was the timing of any investigation. The dynamics of relationships in the class and teachers' understanding of them were not established until well into the academic year and were also subject to change throughout the year.

Arora (1989, p.45) has proposed that most teachers underestimate the incidence of bullying in schools when their assessments are reported against those of pupils and she surmises that

bullying is a 'rarely witnessed event'. Two points arise from this proposal. First, given the evidence of this study, teachers may conceptualise bullying in a narrower way than other parties. They were certainly disinclined to deploy the label 'bullying' for much that they witnessed or were aware of. Second, the teachers in the four focal classes certainly had an understanding of bullying relationships involving their own pupils. They may not have witnessed all the events, but they were insightful about their pupils' involvement, indeed, in two cases, it was taken for granted.

The limitations of preordained definitions for pupils in survey based enquiries has been mentioned elsewhere. Pupils in this research offered variety and breadth of definitions that did not always conform to a narrow, confined form of words that may not embrace all the experiences or relationships that pupils themselves would consider to be bullying. More than anything the 'game' had revealed the variety of views on what constitutes bullying. Thus consistency of definition may exist at the expense of accuracy - and what of that accuracy?

I have argued that it is flawed to rely solely on quantitative measures to ascertain the seriousness or otherwise of the 'bullying' problem in a school. Even though I have questioned the idea of secrecy, it may well be that, in openly confronting the problem in a school, experiences that have been repressed or rendered secret may be revealed. Those relationships that have been surrounded by a conspiracy of silence would have their veils removed or raising awareness would lead to increased numbers of pupils considering their experiences as bullying. Intervention might then lead initially to higher *reported* levels of bullying and it might even be a desirable outcome. It is understandable that in the educational 'market place',

in which schools have become forced to compete, with its dependence on public image, confronting bullying openly brings with it risks of raising reported levels. Schools could be said to be creating a problem where there did not *appear* to be one.

My first reaction to Nicholas Street School had been that it conveyed, indeed valued, openness and yet, as Lorraine Sparrow and others experienced, it took intervention from parents to prompt the transfer of sympathy into action. This raised another definitional element in that an incident only became bullying, or at least taken seriously as such, when equilibrium was threatened through parental interference or through increased personal inconvenience for a member of staff.

Despite bullying being reported as located in the playground and away from the classroom, relationships formed and sustained within a classroom environment were significant (Olweus, 1978). Bullying in Nicholas Street School involved more than the bullies and their victims and many knew what was happening and who were involved. If there was secrecy, it was only in the carrying out of the deed. Talking with the pupils I felt that they became bystanders and onlookers, if not sanctioners, through their knowledge of relationships rather than their witnessing the deeds. Mobilising that knowledge and empowering these pupils appeared to be a pre-requisite of breaking what appeared inertia. Creating a 'telling culture' needed to step beyond requests for victims, the most powerless ones, to come forward but, as advised in the much under-used 'Cluster' group policy, action needed to come from the supposedly non-involved. Adult deployment of power had created a culture of dependence and pupils looked

to the teachers and, to less extent to parents, to manage matters rather than to bring genuine change.

I agree with the argument (Title, 1996; Smith and Sharp, 1994) that being open about the issue and making ideas and worries explicit should form a key element of any anti-bullying strategy. Pupils were invited to be open and to 'tell' in the 'Cluster' group policy, but there were times when the school culture appeared closed. A more open discourse between the school, its pupils and parents could have raised more questions than answers. The value may have been in facilitating an understanding of the complexities of bullying and the dissimilarity of experiences and attitudes of parents that lead to differential advice and, perhaps, practice. Much of the frustration expressed by parents with the way that matters were handled mirrors that experienced by pupils who have been bullied and are given sound advice, but without the support and the skills training to translate that advice into practice. Parents often perceived inertia prior to their intervention and it may have been little more than a perception, resulting from the lack of a clear role for parents at the outset of awareness of possible victimisation. Just as there may be a fear within schools that developing policy on bullying alongside parents can be construed as admission that a school has a bullying problem so, it would seem, perpetuating exclusion of parents can also serve to generate misunderstanding or ignorance. Parents had proved thoughtful and supportive throughout the data collection and they conveyed a wish to be open and usually understood the problems of the school and the intricacies of bullying. In the case of Nicholas Street it was impossible not to conclude that intervention strategies, awareness and training that moved anti-bullying approaches beyond documentation were required.

Nicholas Street School had not taken any step towards involving pupils in resolving conflicts, other than the use of 'circle times' to discuss a range of matters. It was therefore dependent on adults to generate policy and deal with problems. This was illustrated by Mr Benjamin's claim that he did not want an imposed policy from the LEA but looked to create their own approach. Ownership in this case meant the teaching staff.

Central to many of the staff's approaches was a caution about excessively punitive action against perpetrators and many teachers drew upon the spirit of 'Shared Concern' (Pikas, 1989), even if they did not know of or practice the technique. In extreme cases it was not concern that was shared, but an understanding of the reasoning behind the bullying. If not complicity with, there was an appreciation of why Edward and Kevin were recipients of negative attention from peers. Sometimes that very understanding gave an impression of passivity and a willingness to see their experience as inevitable and, despite these teachers appearing to be thoughtful and reflective, there was little outrage to be heard.

Finally, the journey, from initial desire for further exploration of bullying in schools to the writing of this thesis, has been one of constant interaction between collection of data and analysis, reflection and generation of thoughts and ideas. Many of those thoughts have been about my own teaching about the issue of bullying and how I should seek to inform practice.

Amongst the more fundamental changes has been a perception that the best way to develop an anti-bullying strategy is to:

- a) involve pupils at the outset, including the youngest pupils and their teachers;
- b) ensure that bullying is not perceived as a problem only for those who are picked on, but for everybody, and therefore responsibility for resolution lies with everybody, including parents;
- c) move from measuring incidence levels of a supposedly definable phenomenon to shared discussion of what is unacceptable behaviour and that a single incident of that behaviour would be one too many;
- d) seek to generate a culture in the school that not only tolerates difference but celebrates it.

Nicholas Street was an example of a caring school with thoughtful staff, but which conveyed a feeling of institutional passivity in relation to countering bullying. Like many schools it could have been suffering from imposed innovative fatigue and, as a consequence, moving towards the kinds of practices mentioned above constituted a journey that distracted them from fulfilling the requirements of externally enforced change. It was perhaps an irony that, during the development of this thesis, schools have been *compelled* to develop policies on bullying and that it forms part of the Ofsted inspection framework. This model appears to comply with the proposition that ‘if you don’t do this, something unpleasant will happen to you.’ It could well be that the development of anti-bullying strategies has been inhibited by such compulsion and that the time has come to reappraise how schools, and all the parties that contribute to

their success, nurture and develop their own effective practice in countering bullying and how their experience can be shared with others.

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Definitions of Bullying from the Literature

Ahmad Y., Whitney I. and Smith P. (1991) *A survey service for schools on bully/victim problems.*

We say a child is BEING BULLIED, or picked on, when another child, or a group of children, say nasty or unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the child being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a child is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is NOT BULLYING when two children of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel (p.105).

Arora C. and Thompson D. (1987) *Defining bullying for a secondary school.*

Tried to hurt me: threatened to hurt me: demanded money from me: tried to break something that belonged to me: tried to hit me: tried to kick me (p.112)

NB: These were actions devised by pupils as a definition

Askew S. (1989) *Aggressive behaviour in boys: to what extent is it institutionalised?*

A continuum of behaviour which involves the attempt to gain power and dominance over another (pp.61-62).

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (1997) *Advice for Members: Bullying at Work: a Guide for Teachers.*

Persistent (and normally deliberate) misuse of power or position to intimidate, humiliate or undermine (p.1).

Besag V. (1989) *Bullies and Victims.*

The repeated attack - physical, psychological, social or verbal - by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification (p.4).

Bowers L., Smith P. and Binney V. (1993) *Perceived Family Relationships of Bullies, Victims and Bully/Victims in Middle Childhood.*

Bullying ... is ... systematic, occurring repeatedly: and it embraces a variety of hurtful actions, including name calling, social exclusion, money taken or belongings damaged as well as more obvious physical forms such as hitting and kicking (p.3).

Da Fonseca M., Garcia I. and Perez G. (1989) *Violence, Bullying and Counselling in the Iberian Peninsula.*

The questionnaire defined bullying as repetitive violence, both physical and mental, executed by an individual or group towards a subject who is not capable of defending himself in such a situation and who hence becomes a victim (p.44).

DfE (1994) *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence.*

It is deliberately hurtful behaviour: it is repeated often over a period of time; it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves (p.7)

Hazler R., Hoover J. and Oliver R. (1992) *What Kids Say About Bullying.*

Bullying is a form of aggression in which one student - or group of students - physically or psychologically harasses a victim over a period of time. The action is unprovoked and repeated; it is not a single act. Often, too, the bully is perceived as stronger than the victim, which means the victims don't feel they can retaliate (p.20).

Herbert C. (1996) *Stop the Bullying: A Guide for Parents.*

Bullying is a way of being horrible and cruel to another child or group of children. It might happen just once or it can be repeated. The victim may find the behaviour embarrassing, hurtful, or humiliating and be frightened or threatened by it. The bully may not realise this (p.6).

Johnstone M., Munn P. and Edwards L. (1992) *Action Against Bullying: Drawing from Experience.*

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else. To do this, the bully has to have some sort of power over the victim, a power not always recognisable to the teacher (p.3).

Jones E. (1991) *Practical considerations in dealing with bullying in secondary school.*

The bully is someone who is responsible for premeditated, continuous, malicious and belittling tyranny. The victim is on the receiving end, repeatedly, defencelessly and typically without a champion (p.16).

Kikkawa, M. (1987) *Teachers' Opinions and Treatments for Bully/victim Problems Among Students in Junior and Senior High Schools: Results of a Fact Finding Survey.*

Aggressive behaviour which occurs in most cases on the personal relations among victims, bullies and bystanders in formal or informal social groups. Bullies are the children who are in advantageous position and do mental or physical damages to victims intentionally and one-sidedly. Victims are the children who are in disadvantageous position in the peer group or in the class and are, one-sidedly, mentally damaged or physically injured by bullies (p.26).

Lane D. (1989) *Violent Histories: Bullying and Criminality.*

The definition used in this study is similar to the legal term 'Threatening Behaviour'. Bullying is therefore taken to include any action or implied action, such as threats or violence, intended to cause fear and distress. Unlike the legal definition, the behaviour had to be repeated on more than one occasion. The definition includes the concept of intention and therefore cannot be based simply on the observation of a teacher, but must include evidence that those involved intended or felt fear (p.96).

Lee C. (1993) *An examination of the perceptions of bullying in pupils aged between 10 and 13 years.*

Bullying is when someone is hit, kicked, threatened, called hurtful names or other things like that: when someone is teased for several days or over a longer period of time and these things may take place several times and the person being bullied cannot defend himself or herself but it is not bullying when two people who are about the same size or strength have the odd fight and quarrel (p.24).

Lowenstein, L. (1978) *Who is the bully?*

Physical or verbal attacks on the child or group of children, led by a bully on less adequate or effective children. Causing another child or children physical or psychological distress, as reported by the victim, or observed by a teacher, or reported by a parent of the victim (p.147).

O'Moore A. (1995) *Bullying Behaviour in Children and Adolescents in Ireland.*

Refers to the guidelines launched by the Department of Education (1993)
The National Guidelines ... define bullying as repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conduct by an individual or group of individuals against another or others. It is further stated that the 'isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, should not be described as bullying. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and ongoing is regarded as bullying (p.56).

Olweus D. (1993) *Bullying at School.*

Bullying or victimisation: A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students." He also goes to talk about an "imbalance of strength (an asymmetric power relationship) (p.9).

Pearce J. (1991) *What Can Be Done About the Bully?*

The deliberate use of aggression: An unequal power relationship between the bully and the victim: the causing of physical pain and/or emotional distress (p.70).

Rigby K. (1996) *Bullying in Schools: What To Do About It.*

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group or persons (p.15)

Roland E. (1989) *Bullying: The Scandinavian Research Tradition.*

Bullying is longstanding violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself in the actual situation (p.21).

Slee P. (1993) *Bullying: A Preliminary Investigation of its Nature and the Effects of Social Cognition.*

As commonly identified bullying involves (1) an imbalance of strength-physical or psychological, (2) a deliberate intention to hurt the other where the aggressive act is largely unprovoked and (3) repeated negative activities (p.47).

Smith P. and Thompson D. (1991) *Dealing with Bully/Victim Problems in the UK.*

Bullying intentionally causes hurt to the recipient The hurt done is unprovoked ... Bullying is thought of as a repeated action; something which happens once or twice would not be called bullying ... the child doing the bullying is generally thought of as being stronger.... the victim is not in a position to retaliate very effectively (p.1).

Smith P. and Sharp S. (1994) *School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives.*

Bullying can be described as the systematic abuse of power ... if the abuse is systematic - repeated and deliberate - bullying seems a good name to describe it (p.2).

Smith D. and Stephenson P. (1991) *Why some schools don't have bullies.*

An interaction in which a more dominant individual or group intentionally causes distress to a less dominant individual or group (p.133).

Stephenson P. and Smith D. (1989) *Bullying in the Junior School.*

Bullying is a form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour that is intended to and does, in fact, cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim) it is not only necessary that the bully exhibits aggressive behaviour which is intended to cause distress, it is also necessary that the victim experiences distress (p.45).

Tattum D. (1989) *Violence and Aggression in Schools.*

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress. It can be occasional and short-lived, or it can regular and long-standing (p.10).

Tattum D. and Herbert G. (1990) *Bullying: A Positive Response.*

It is a wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone (p.3).

White M. (1987) *The Japanese Educational Challenge.*

Attacks on a particular individual, physical and/or through force of words, involving threats or pushing, shoving or punching, being shunned by classmates, psychological pressure continually repeated, resulting in suffering to the victim (p.xx)

Winkley L. (1996), *Emotional Problems in Children and Young People.*

Systematic nastiness involving either verbal abuse, psychological pressure or physical violence towards a child. It includes any systematic unkind comments or actions and comprises a continuum of unpleasantness from name calling, ostracising and threatening through to kicking and punching. As secrecy is a central feature, teachers are usually unaware unless the child or parent complains (p.124).

Ziegler S. and Rosenstein-Manner, M. (1991) *Bullying in Schools: Toronto in an International Context.*

The tendency for some children to frequently oppress, harrass, or intimidate other children verbally, physically or both (p.i).

Zindi F. (1994), *Bullying at Boarding School: a Zimbabwe Study.*

- 1) it must occur over a prolonged period of time rather than being a single aggressive act;
- 2) it must involve an imbalance of power, the powerful attacking the powerless;
- 3) it can be verbal, physical or psychological in nature (p.23).

Appendix 2: Definitions of Bullying: the Constructs

	<i>Intent</i>	<i>Hurt</i>	<i>Repetition</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Un-provoked</i>
<i>Ahmad et al. (1991)</i>						
<i>Arora and Thompson (1987)</i>						
<i>Askew (1989)</i>						
<i>ATL (1997)</i>						
<i>Besag (1989)</i>						
<i>Bowers et al. (1993)</i>						
<i>Da Fonseca et al. (1989)</i>						
<i>DfE (1994)</i>						
<i>Hazler et al. (1992)</i>						
<i>Herbert (1996)</i>						
<i>Johnstone et al. (1992)</i>						
<i>Jones (1991)</i>						
<i>Kikkawa (1987)</i>						
<i>Lane (1989)</i>						
<i>Lee (1993)</i>						
<i>Lowenstein (1978)</i>						
<i>O'Moore (1995)</i>						
<i>Olweus (1993)</i>						

	<i>Intent</i>	<i>Hurt</i>	<i>Repetition</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Un- provoked</i>
<i>Pearce (1991)</i>						
<i>Rigby (1996)</i>						
<i>Roland (1989)</i>						
<i>Slee (1993)</i>						
<i>Smith and Thompson (1991)</i>						
<i>Smith and Sharp (1994)</i>						
<i>Smith and Stephenson (1991)</i>						
<i>Stephenson and Smith (1989)</i>						
<i>Tattum (1989)</i>						
<i>Tattum and Herbert (1990)</i>						
<i>White (1987)</i>						
<i>Winkley (1996)</i>						
<i>Ziegler R-Manner (1991)</i>						
<i>Zindi (1994)</i>						

Appendix 3: The Basic Stages of the 'No-Blame Approach' and 'Shared Concern Method'

	<i>No-Blame Approach</i>	<i>Shared Concern Method</i>
Step	Action	Action
1)	interview with the victim	meet with the involved individually
2)	meet with the involved	interview with the victim
3)	explain the problem	establish if they contribute to problem
4)	share responsibility	meet with involved in a group
5)	ask the group for ideas	establish the shared concern for the victim
6)	leave it up to them	hold resolution meeting with all involved
7)	meet them again	meet them again

Appendix 4: Comparison of the 'Shared Concern Method' and the 'No-Blame Approach'

Similarities

- Perceiving the perpetrator and those who are bystanders as a group.
- Placing clear emphasis upon shared responsibility generated through a series of meetings with perpetrators and bystanders.
- The teacher's/counsellor's role is to orientate the group towards the future and to solving the problem. To that end there is minimal discussion of what happened or why it happened.
- Working with groups in order to draw upon the group to change towards more positive interactions with the victim and, consequently, the assumption that the onus to stop the bullying does not rest with that victim.
- These approaches may have additional merit for primary age pupils if, as Borg (1998, p.441) suggests, this age group are more impulsive and repentant than their secondary age counterparts.

Differences

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Shared Concern Method</i>	<i>No Blame Approach</i>
Tone of Interview	The focus is on the action such as 'some guys have been a bit tough on Karl, what are you going to do?'	Much is made of the feelings of the victim, and the transmission of those feelings to perpetrators.
Order of interview	Bullies are interviewed singly before any meeting with a victim with a view to countering accusations that the victim might have 'told' on them.	The feelings of the victim are ascertained before a group meeting of the bullies and any pupils who were involved or nearby.
Suitability	Pikas commends his approach for pupils over the age of twelve years and in the case of group bullying ('mobbing') only.	Maines and Robinson (1992) believe that their approach is suitable for 'one to one' bullying because colluders or onlookers who have the effect of condoning the situation are highly likely to be present.
Structure	Highly structured and scripted.	Very clear stages, although the guidance given permits a more flexible approach.

“Bullying in the Primary School: A Case Study”

Ethics Protocol

[Based on information and guidelines provided in ‘Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research’ (British Educational Research Association) and the ‘Ethical principles for research involving human participants’ (University of Plymouth)].

Informed Consent

- The permission of the Headteacher will be sought prior to entry to the school and the role of the researcher explained to staff either by the Headteacher or the researcher.
- When members of staff, pupils or parents are to be interviewed or asked to complete questionnaires, they will be informed of the subject of the research in advance. Those being interviewed will be informed that they have the right to withdraw at any time.
- Permission to interview pupils or to ask them to complete questionnaires will be sought from their class teachers acting in loco parentis. In cases deemed as particularly sensitive by the teacher or the researcher, permission will be sought from the parents.

Confidentiality

a) Questionnaires and Interviews

- Participants will be assured before being asked to complete questionnaires or agreeing to be interviewed, that the information that is given will not be shared with any other person in such a way that they would be recognised from that information.
- Every effort will be made to preserve anonymity for the evidence in any document based on the research (pseudonyms or no names at all will be used).
- Should reference be made to the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher of the case study school, or to any information given by them in any document arising from the research, they will be referred to as the ‘The Headteacher’ and ‘The Deputy Headteacher’ or a pseudonym.
- A fictitious name for the school and a non-specific geographical location will be used in any documents arising from the research.

a) Observation

- It is intended that the researcher will seek to maximise the non-participant approach. However, given that bullying might be observed and there may no

member of staff to intervene, the researcher will seek to respond to the incident in accordance with the school policy on such matters.

- All accounts written from observation of individuals will seek to maintain maximum anonymity and confidentiality.
- In the event of the subject of bullying, or issues relating to bullying, forming the agenda, or part of the agenda, of a meeting of the staff, governors or parents' association, the researcher will seek to attend as an observer but, if requested, will withdraw from the meeting during any discussion that might be taking place on items other than the subject of the research.

Right to Withdraw

All participants in the research will be informed that they have the right to withdraw themselves from the data gathering procedures. Should any pupil become, or seem to become, upset or worried during interviews or the completion of questionnaires, the process will be postponed or, if they wish cancelled.

Protection from Harm

Involvement in the study will not subject participants to any risk of harm beyond that associated with normal school activities. During the Bullying 'game' groups will be constructed that do not include pupils who are deemed as being at risk of being teased or bullied by fellow group members. The decision about group construction will be an agreement between the class teacher and myself. Throughout the process I will ensure that the aspirations of this element of the protocol are maintained.

Openness and Honesty

I will be open and honest with all participants concerning the nature, purpose and intended outcome of the research with the following exception. I will not inform the pupils about my background as a school teacher, knowledge of which might influence their responses.

Debriefing

- On conclusion of the study the researcher will provide an account of the main findings of the research to the staff of the case study school. An account of the main findings may be given to either individual parents or pupils, if requested by them, and also may be given to groups or classes of pupils.
- Should it be deemed appropriate by both the Headteacher and the researcher, information which might constitute provisional 'feedback' will be provided ahead of any final report.

Christopher Lee

“Bullying in the Primary School: A Case Study”

Introductory Information

I work at the Rolle School of Education, University of Plymouth as a lecturer in Special Educational Needs. I have been a teacher in mainstream and special schools and have become interested in the management of pupil behaviour, specifically that of bullying. I have researched and published findings on pupil perceptions of bullying and now wish to broaden my research to take into account the perspectives of staff, parents and pupils.

My initial aims are:

1. To establish the common ground and differences in pupil, teacher and parental perceptions of bullying in one primary school.
2. To develop insights into the issues of incidence, definition, attitude towards, impact and management of bullying in that school.
3. To develop insights into perceptions of bullies, their victims and those who are neither bullies or victims.
4. To report back my findings to the school.
5. To write up the findings for submission for PhD awarded by the University of Plymouth.

What I would like to do:

I want to spend at least one day a week in a school during the next academic year, initially observing children during playtimes and working in their classrooms. Once my presence is established I should like to talk with and interview all staff, including ancillary staff and ‘meal-time assistants’, as well as interview parents at other times. In addition, I shall need to ask questions about what I have observed and noted but this would be done at times that do not inconvenience you. I will ask for questionnaires to be completed and, if you agree, interviews to be recorded on tape. On completion of my research I would like to return to the school and present my findings.

Appendix 6: Interview schedule: Pupils

Opening questions	How are you? How is the work going? What do think of (current issue)? What did you watch on TV last night?
Relationships	How do you get on with the pupils in your class? How do they get with you? Who are your best friends? Any pupils that you don't get on with? Nature of disagreements?
Bullying general	What do you think about bullying in schools? Do pupils and adults take bullying seriously? Should schools deal with it?
Definition	What is it? Are there any differences between nasty teasing and bullying?
Involvement in Bullying	Any pupils bullying you or pick on you or tease you in a nasty way? Do you pick on others? Is there anyone who, if I were to ask them, would say that you picked on them? Who are the involved pupils?
Experience	What happens between? Who gets involved? What do you think about it? Where does it take place?
Dealing with bullying	How do people deal with bullying? MTAs. teachers, pupils, parents, pupils What are the rules? How do you find out about them? Do people keep them? Who makes them? 'Cluster Group' policy?
Finally	Any further comment? Review interview process. Thank you

Appendix 7: Interview schedule: Teachers

Definition / Contemporary interest	<p>Current interest?</p> <p>Attitude to issue</p> <p>Awareness of any specific approaches, documents and policies.</p> <p>Is it taken seriously – wider level, school level, class level, personal level?</p> <p>Definition</p>
Relationships	<p>How do the pupils in your class get on?</p> <p>How do they get with you?</p> <p>Who are involved in negative relationships (bullying? – why?)</p> <p>Nature of disagreements?</p>
Involvement in Bullying / Experience	<p>Any pupils bullying in the class?</p> <p>How do you know?</p> <p>What's happening</p> <p>Where does it take place?</p>
Dealing with bullying	<p>How does he/she deal with bullying?</p> <p>The school, MTAs, pupils, parents, pupils</p> <p>What are the rules?</p> <p>Whose rules?</p> <p>How do pupils find out about them?</p> <p>'Cluster Group' policy?</p>
Finally	<p>Any further comment?</p> <p>Review interview process.</p> <p>Second interviews</p> <p>Thank you</p>

Appendix 8: Interview schedule: Parents

Definition / Contemporary interest	Current interest? Attitude to issue Definition Is it taken seriously – wider level, school level, class level, personal level?
Relationships	Have your children many friends? Have they very close friends? How do your children get on with others?
Involvement in Bullying / Experience	Any experience of bullying involving children? How do you know? What happened
Dealing with bullying (if appropriate)	How do you deal with bullying? How does the school deal with it? (The school, MTAs, pupils, parents, pupils) How do you know? What are the rules? How did find out about them? 'Cluster Group' policy?
Finally	Any further comment? Review interview process. Thank you

Appendix 9: Ethical Agreement with Transcriber

“Bullying in the Primary School: A Case Study”

Ethics Protocol

I have read and agree to abide by the Ethics Protocol for the above piece of research, with which I am involved in a secretarial capacity. I will respect the right to confidentiality of all participants and will seek to maintain this both during and after the period of the study. In addition to the above points I will ensure that no copy of material with which I have been involved will be held on hard disk and all transcripts will be passed on immediately to the researcher on a ‘floppy’ disk.

Signed (Transcriber)

Signed (Researcher)

11/9/94

Appendix 10: Pupil Questionnaire

Bullying and Nasty Teasing in Our School: Pupil Questionnaire

Would you please answer the questions that follow as honestly as possible? You do not have to write your name on the paper and no one, other than myself, will see your answers. Neither your name, the name of any other pupil you might mention or the name of the school will be passed on to anyone else. No real names will be used in my writing and research.

Thank you very much.

Chris.

Please complete before we begin

Class

Please tick

Girl

Boy

1a) What do you think bullying is?

Bullying is:

.....
.....

1b) What do you think nasty teasing is?

Nasty teasing is:

.....
.....

1c) Which is worse? *(please tick just one box)*

Bullying is worse than nasty teasing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nasty teasing is worse than bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are both as bad as each other	<input type="checkbox"/>

because:.....
.....

2a) Are there any pupils in the class, or in the school, who would say that **you** have bullied or teased **them** in a nasty way? *(please tick a box)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 3a)

2b) What happened that might make them think this (you might like to mention how often it happened and when it happened)?

.....
.....
.....

2c) Why did you do that to them?

.....
.....
.....

3a) Are there any pupils in the class or in the school who you would say teased you in a nasty way or bullied you? (please tick a box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 4a)

3b) What happened that might make them think this? (You might like to mention how often it happened and when it happened)

.....
.....

3c) What happened that might make you think of this? (You might like to mention how often it happened and when it happened)

.....
.....

4a) Have you ever seen anything in this school that you would call bullying or nasty teasing even though you were not involved? (please tick)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

4b) If you answered 'Yes' what happened?

.....
.....

5a) Do you think there are any special places where children bully, nasty tease or both in this school?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 6a)

5b) If you answered 'Yes' where are they?

.....
.....

5c) How do you know?

.....
.....

6a) Do you think there are any pupils in your class who are bullied, teased nastily or both by other pupils? *(please tick)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 6b)

If you answered 'Yes' why do you think they get picked on?

.....

.....

6b) Do you think there are any pupils in your class who bully, nasty tease or do both to other pupils? *(please tick one box)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 7)

If you answered 'Yes' why do you think they do it?

.....

.....

7a) How well does this school deal with bullying and nasty teasing? *(please tick one)*

Very well indeed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite well	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither well nor badly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite badly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very badly indeed	<input type="checkbox"/>

7b) Why did you tick that box?

.....

.....

8a) Do you think that the teachers could do more to help? *(please tick)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 9)

8b) If you answered 'Yes' why do you think that they could do more to help?

.....
.....

8c) If you answered 'Yes' what do you think they could do?

.....
.....

9a) Do you think that the meal time assistants ('dinner ladies') could do more to help?
(please tick)

Yes	
No	

if you answered 'No' please go to question 10)

9b) If you answered 'Yes' why do you think that they could do more to help?

.....
.....

9c) If you answered 'Yes' what do you think they could do?

.....
.....

10a) Do you think that the pupils themselves could do more to help? *(please tick)*

Yes	
No	

if you answered 'No' please go to question 11)

10b) If you answered 'Yes' why do you think that they could do more to help?

.....
.....

10c) If you answered 'Yes' what do you think they could do?

.....
.....

11) Bullying and nasty teasing in this school is *(please tick)*

A very big problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite a big problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither a big problem nor a small problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite a small problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not a problem at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

12) Do you think that bullying and nasty teasing is an important problem? *(please tick)?*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you answered 'No' please go to question 13)

Why did you tick that box?

.....
.....

13) If you were to be bullied or teased in a nasty way today what would you do about it?

.....
.....

14) Is there anything else that you would like to say about bullying and nasty teasing? (You may write on this side of the paper)?

Thank you for all your help, Chris

Appendix 11: Parents' Questionnaire

Bullying and Nasty Teasing in Our School

Would you please answer the questions that follow as honestly as possible? No one, other than myself, will see your answers. Neither your name, the name of anyone you might mention, nor the name of the school will be passed on to anyone else. No real names will be used in my writing and research.

Thank you very much:

Chris Lee: *University of Plymouth*

Information

How many children do you have at the school?

In which year(s) are they? (please tick)

<i>Year</i>	Recept.	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6
<i>tick</i>							

What is their gender?

boys	
girls	

Are you a qualified teacher?

yes	
no	

Are you a Mealtime Assistant at Nicholas Street school?

yes	
no	

Are you a Mealtime Assistant at any other school?

yes	
no	

1a) What do you think bullying is? Bullying is:

.....
.....

1b) What do you think nasty teasing is? Nasty teasing is:

.....
.....

1c) Which is worse? (please tick just one box)

Bullying is worse than nasty teasing

Nasty teasing is worse than bullying

They are both as bad as each other

because:.....
.....

2a) Do you believe or know that your child or one of your children has been involved in an incident in which **they have bullied or teased** others in a nasty way? *(please tick a box)*

Yes	
No	

if you answered 'No' please go to question 3a)

2b) What happened that might make them think this? (You might like to mention how often it happened and when it happened)

.....
.....

2c) How did you find out about it?

.....
.....

3a) Do you believe or know that your child or one of your children has been involved in an incident in which **they have been bullied or teased** by others in a nasty way? *(please tick a box)*

Yes	
No	

if you answered 'No' please go to question 4a)

3b) What happened that might make them think this? (You might like to mention how often it happened and when it happened)

.....
.....

3c) How did you find out about it?

.....
.....

4a) Do you think there are any special places where children bully, nasty tease or both in this school?

Yes	
No	

if you answered 'No' please go to question 5a)

4b) If you answered 'Yes' where are they?

.....
.....

4c) How do you know?

.....
.....

5) Do you believe that bullying and nasty teasing are a problem in your child's (children's) school? *(please tick)*

Yes	
No	

Why do you believe this?

.....
.....

6) What do you understand the policy of the school to be in dealing with such matters?

.....
.....

7a) How well does the school deal with bullying and nasty teasing? *(please tick)*

Very well indeed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite well	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither well nor badly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite badly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very badly indeed	<input type="checkbox"/>

7b) Why did you tick that box?.....
.....

8) Do you think that the teachers could do more to help? *(please tick)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give reasons for your answer

.....
.....
.....

9) Do you think that the Mealtime Assistants ('dinner ladies') could do more to help? *(please tick)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give reasons for your answer

.....
.....
.....

10) Do you think that the pupils themselves could do more to help? *(please tick)*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give reasons for your answer

.....
.....
.....

11) Bullying and nasty teasing in this school is *(please tick)*

A very big problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite a big problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither a big problem nor a small problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite a small problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not a problem at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

12) Do you think that bullying and nasty teasing is an important problem? *(please tick)?*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why did you tick that box?

.....
.....

13) What is your view on the leaflet, recently sent home from school, about bullying in schools?

.....
.....

14) If your child (children) were to be bullied or teased in a nasty way today, what would you do about it?

.....
.....

15) Is there anything else that you would like to say about bullying and nasty teasing? (You may write on the other side of the paper)

.....
.....

Many thanks for taking part in the research.

Chris Lee *(University of Plymouth)*

Appendix 12: Pupils' Pseudonyms

<i>Mr Hogan 5H</i>	<i>Mr Yates 5Y</i>	<i>Ms James 6J</i>	<i>Ms Alexander 6A</i>
Scott	Billy	Lorraine	Jacob
Paul	Kay	Wasim	Kerry
Kevin	Harriet	Charles	Robin
Jessica	Hilary	Rebecca	Amanda
Christine	Brian	Darren	Bruce
Pauline	Derek	Mandy	Colette
Matthew	Keith	Debbie	Shaun
Lee	Olivia	Andrea	Joanna
Max	Jack	Martin	William
Victoria	Suzi	Belinda	Rhiannon
Leanne	Vanessa	Sandra	George
Denise	Lisa	Karen	Garry
Claudia	Kim	Angela	Miles
Melanie	Eileen	David	Kathy
Jamie	Sarah-Jane	Ricky	Jenny
Noel	Jackie	Susie	Anna
Ellen	Raymond	Karl	Julie
Rachel	Edward	Valerie	Annette
Abigail	Tony	Carly	Jeff
Kirsty	Lindsey	John	Ian
Janet	Wendy	Linda	Carolyn
Liam	Peter	Nicola	
Ross	Joseph	Sam	
Georgia	Barbara		
Naomi	Ron		
Adele	Terry		
Crystal	Ashley		
Douglas	Rod		
	Colin		
	Cyril		
	Sharon		
	Steve		

Appendix 13: Parents' Pseudonyms

<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Questionnaires</i>
Mr and Mrs Avocet	Mrs Partridge
Mrs Brambling	Mrs Quail
Mrs Crane (teacher - not at Nicholas Street)	Mrs Redstart
Mrs Dove (teacher - not at Nicholas Street)	Mrs Siskin
Mr and Mrs Eagle	Mrs Teal (former MTA - at Nicholas Street)
(Mrs Eagle governor at Nicholas Street)	Mrs Wren
Mrs and Mrs Finch	(occasional MTA - at Nicholas Street)
Mrs Goldcrest	Mrs Yellowhammer
Mr and Mrs Heron	Mrs Bittern
Mrs Ibis	Mrs Curlew (MTA - not at Nicholas Street)
Mrs Jay	Mrs Dunlin
Mrs Kite	Mrs Eider
Mr and Mrs Lark	Mrs Falcon (teacher - not at Nicholas Street)
Mrs Mallard	Mrs Gannet
Mr and Mrs Nightingale	Mrs Harrier (teacher - not at Nicholas Street)
Mrs Sparrow (teacher - not at Nicholas Street)	Mrs Jackdaw

Appendix 14: 'Cluster' group policy: Pupils

Guidance for Pupils

What should you do if you are bullied, teased or picked on?

Remember: it's not your fault. Bullies have no right to do this. You are not to blame.

- Tell your teacher, a friend or another adult in school. If you don't tell someone, perhaps nobody else will either. Other people might get bullied as well. Set a good example.
- Don't call the bully names, nor hit them. You might get into trouble yourself and make things worse. Tell the bully firmly that people are not for hurting, and then tell an adult about it.
- If someone is calling you names or making horrible comments, tell them firmly and calmly that what they are doing is very hurtful, and walk away. Then tell an adult about it.

What should you do if you see someone else being bullied?

Take action!

- Tell a teacher or other adult straight away. If you watch and do nothing the bully will feel big and important.
- Don't be friendly to the bully just because you feel afraid. Bullies will stop if their bullying doesn't get them attention.
- If you see other pupils bullying, calling names or making horrible comments, tell them to stop and that people are not for hurting, and then tell an adult.
- Don't hurt the bully, but tell a teacher or other adult about the incident.
- Help the person who is being bullied by reassuring them, and helping them to feel it's not their fault.

Help to stamp out bullying! Don't keep it a secret.

Appendix 15: 'Cluster' group policy: Staff

A Guide for Staff

At school, we aim

- To provide a safe and secure environment within which bullying has no place.
- To ensure that any incidents which do take place are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying is

The wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

It can be PHYSICAL, VERBAL, or EMOTIONAL, involving physical injury, threats and intimidation, teasing and name-calling.

It can be continuous or an isolated incident

The school will:

- take the matter seriously
- protect the child until the matter can be sorted out.
- talk to the victim, the bully and any witnesses.
- keep parents informed and involved in any progress.
- take action to prevent further bullying

Awareness

Staff often see signs which may indicate that their child is being bullied: eg

- withdrawal
- aggressive behaviour
- schoolwork problems
- disturbed sleep and nightmares
- injuries
- becoming difficult or argumentative
- fear of going to school
- missing possessions
- stealing
- low self-esteem

If you believe a child is being bullied or is bullying others: -

- **Inform a senior colleague and discuss the plan of action.**
- Discover the details, dealing sympathetically with all pupils involved.
- Take the necessary (agreed) action to deal with the incident

Action: some dos and don'ts:

First step:

DO remain calm: you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control.

DO take the incident or report seriously.

DO think hard about whether your action needs to be public or private.

DO reassure the victims; DON'T make them feel inadequate or foolish.

DO offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).

DO ask the victim what ideas they have to help themselves – the more they can solve, the better their self-image will be.

DO make it plain to the bully that you disapprove (without humiliating him/her).

Do encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view, and ask if s/he has any constructive ideas.

DO punish the bully if you have to, but be careful how you do this. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it's OK to bully, if you have the power.

DO explain clearly the punishment and explain why it is being given.

Involving others:-

DO inform the appropriate senior teacher(s) of what you are doing, and any other colleagues(s) if the incident arose where others should be vigilant eg supervising toilets.

Final steps:-

DO make sure the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you.

DO try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence, if possible.

What to avoid:

DON'T BULLY THE BULLY, nor humiliate him/her.

DON'T be over protective and refuse to allow the victim to help him/herself.

DON'T assume the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour, with the bully.

DON'T call in the parents without having a constructive plan to offer.

Listening to children – some hints

Accepting reports of bullying from children:-

Attend to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Be patient; wait during silences; prompt gently – “AND?”

Accept what is said (“believe” is too strong) – keep an open mind if you can.

Annotate: jot down notes of the main details.

Allay fears: reassure the child that s/he was right to tell you.
(don't promise confidentiality though).

Assuage any guilt: reassure the pupil that it is not his/her fault that s/he is being bullied, and that it is vital that the situation is sorted out.

Remember that the person the child is talking about may be an adult (parent or colleague)

Talking with alleged bully

Hear the bully's story objectively.

In dealing with the bully, there are three positive aims:

1. to stop the bullying behaviour immediately.
2. to change the pupil's attitudes and behaviour for the future.
3. to reconcile the pupils involved, if possible – this may well mean a meeting between the victim and bully.

Finally:

In the very rare instances where you discover details which are very distressing indeed, you may need some support for yourself; if so, ask for it.

Appendix 16: 'Cluster' group policy: Parents

A Guide for Parents

At school, we aim

- To provide a safe and secure environment within which bullying has no place.
- To ensure that any incidents which do take place are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying is

The wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

It can be PHYSICAL, VERBAL, or EMOTIONAL, involving physical injury, threats and intimidation, teasing and name calling.

It can be continuous or an isolated incident

Awareness

Parents often see signs which may indicate that their child is being bullied: eg

- becoming withdrawn or moody
- becoming uncharacteristically difficult or argumentative
- aggressive behaviour
- fear of going to school
- schoolwork problems
- missing possessions
- regular disturbed sleep and nightmares
- bed-wetting
- stealing
- unexplained injuries
- low self-esteem

Action

If you believe your child is being bullied or is bullying others then:

- 1) **contact the school immediately, so that a joint plan of action can be started quickly:**
- 2) understand that your child may find it difficult to talk about what is worrying him/her, and be prepared to talk or find out in other ways
- 3) if s/he does talk listen to him/her and take the situation seriously (see 'Hints' overleaf)
- 4) let him/her know right away that you will do whatever is necessary to stop the bullying
- 5) be aware that your own reactions may get in the way of what's best for him/her, and act carefully and with advice where necessary.

The school will:

- take the matter seriously
- protect your child until the matter can be sorted out
- talk to the victim, the bully and any witnesses
- keep you informed and involved in any progress
- take action to prevent further bullying

Listening to children – some hints

- attend to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Be patient; wait during silences; prompt gently – ‘And?’
- accept what is being said (‘believe is too strong – keep an open mind if you can)
- jot down brief notes of the details
- reassure your child that he/she was right to tell you
- reassure him/her that it is not his/her fault that s/he is being bullied, and that it is vital that the situation is sorted out.
- Try to encourage your child to offer his/her own solutions to him/herself – this will help their morale and self-image.

Finally,

In the very rare instances that you discover details which are very distressing or upsetting indeed, *you* might need some support for yourself; if so, ask for it.

Appendix 17: 'Cluster' group policy statement

Rationale:

Bullying, if allowed to occur in school, can make a pupil's life miserable. Every pupil has a basic right to feel free of the threat of bullying. If we recognise that there may on occasions, be a problem with bullying in school and develop an agreed policy and guidelines for dealing with it, then, as a school, we are more likely to deal with the issue.

Definitions:

- The wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten another person.
- Words or actions that upset or frighten others.
- Deliberately making others feel uncomfortable.

Aims:

- To provide a safe and secure environment within which bullying has no place.
- To ensure that any incidents that do take place are dealt with promptly and effectively

Guidelines:

Clear guidelines will assist the school in its aims:-

- To enable effective learning to take place.
- To help everyone to take responsibility for their own actions.
- To treat each other with care and consideration.
- To be consistent and fair.
- To respect property.
- To keep the school a safe, clean and pleasant.

Bullying and harassment will not be accepted. No one should have to tolerate being hurt or threatened by another person. Staff, children and parents need to work together to achieve this.

Appendix 18: Basic statistical data: derived from pupils' questionnaire			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	57	55.3
	Female	46	44.7
1c) Bullying worse than teasing	Bullying worse	19	19.2
	Teasing worse	4	4.0
	Both bad	76	76.8
2a) Bullied or nasty teased	Yes	52	52.5
	No	47	47.5
3a) Been bullied or nasty teased	Yes	76	76.8
	No	23	23.2
4a) Seen bullying	Yes	88	85.4
	No	15	14.6
5a) Special places	Yes	49	47.6
	No	54	51.9
6a) Your class who are bullied	Yes	76	73.8
	No	27	26.2
6b) Your class who bully	Yes	74	74
	No	26	26
7a) School deal with bullying	Very well indeed	9	8.7
	Quite well	34	32.7
	Neither	19	18.3
	Quite badly	28	26.9
	Very badly indeed	14	13.5
8a) Teachers could do more	Yes	62	60.8
	No	40	39.2
9a) MTAs could do more	Yes	60	58.3
	No	43	41.7
10a) Pupils could do more	Yes	51	50.5
	No	50	49.5
11) Size of problem	Very big problem	27	26.0
	Quite big	43	41.3
	Not big nor small	17	16.3
	Quite small	12	11.5
	Not a problem	5	4.8
12) Important problem	Yes	90	86.5
	No	14	13.5

Appendix 19: Admitting to bullying: derived from interviews	
Confessors	
Belinda (6J)	<i>There is someone called Robin. When you start teasing him and everything he goes off in a huff. It is really funny.</i>
Paul (5H)	<i>Well if I'm honest yeah sometimes.</i>
Harriet (5Y)	<i>Maybe Jack because me and Billy used to call him horrible names</i>
Raymond (5Y)	<i>Me a bit of a bully? Mostly yeah.</i>
Tony (5Y)	<i>Yes. Cyril who you just saw now. Yeah, Edward.</i>
Justifiers	
Wendy (5Y)	<i>I don't know. Olivia would because I'm being friends with Vanessa and she doesn't like that.</i>
Lee (5H)	<i>Kevin might cos he is like that ... he likes think that we bully him, like when we get him.</i>
Debbie (6J)	<i>When people hurt my feelings I get a bit out of hand as well.</i>
Ellen (5H)	<i>Adele....it was a long time ago and I used to always pick on her because Georgia kept really coming to me crying, saying that Adele had been hurting her.</i>
Liam (5H)	<i>I can be a bit of a picker....I only do it if they keep picking on me.</i>
Jackie (5Y)	<i>Yes and no, I don't know. Cos sometimes I bully them and they think oh gosh she is not very nice and then the next time they think oh yeah she is not so bad after all.</i>
Unintentional	
Kay (5Y)	<i>I just think people want to think of me as a bully in that way. I'm not a bully but I think I'm more of stopping people doing what they shouldn't do. Is that bullying? No, but people might think of me as a bully</i>
Max (5H)	<i>Matthew and Liam because they like take everything personally... like I don't really mean it ... he continued by suggesting that they took matters too 'personally and like I don't really mean it but they just get on my nerves'.</i>
Ross (5H)	<i>Call people names ... I don't mean to upset them, it's just that sometimes they get on my nerves.</i>
Peter (5Y)	<i>I tease when I bully, tease and when they push me, I just pick them up and slam them on the floor, just lift their legs up like that. No, I don't really mean to hurt, it's just to get them back for what they did....</i>
Unsure/Defensive	
Anna (6J)	<i>Um, I might have bullied Kelly or some other people once or twice</i>
Christine (5H)	<i>I don't know really, I don't think so, they might</i>
Victoria (5H)	<i>Probably some people I don't really want to say.</i>
Melanie (5H)	<i>I don't think so</i>
Matthew (5H)	<i>I don't know</i>
Rachel (5H)	<i>I don't really know because most of my friends really know me that well and they really like me, so I don't know if they would</i>
Billy (5Y)	<i>Not really, I don't think so. Maybe I get on Edward's nerve a tiny bit but I don't bully him</i>
Repudiator/Outraged	
John (6J)	<i>No ... I don't like bullying a lot. It's just for silly people.</i>
Martin (6J)	<i>No, never, I don't like bullying</i>
Hilary (5Y)	<i>No</i>
Denise (5H)	<i>No, no one</i>
Ian (6A)	<i>No, I'm quite good friends with nearly all the class</i>

Appendix 20: Admitting to being bullied: derived from interviews*Positive*

Mandy (6J)	<i>Yes when I first came here I got picked on in the Infants because I wore glasses. They called me Specky Four Eyes.</i>
Amanda (6A)	<i>Yeah well not really bullied but teased. ... Like I was being teased about my weight and called fatty and stuff like that</i>
Hilary (5Y)	<i>Yes</i>
Victoria (5H)	<i>Yeah, it's when I'm out in the playground and Janet comes to me, we start playing and then Ellen and Adele come and break me and Janet up and start hitting me.</i>
Melanie (5H)	<i>Yes, Kevin, he just I don't know he just got in a stress and he came up to me and he kicked me.</i>
Peter (5Y)	<i>No not this class - I have been before</i>
Billy (5Y)	<i>Yeah, definitely by Eileen quite a lot of times. Well she just calls me names, she is quite strong I must say and she kind of bosses you around and gets you to be her friend.</i>
Kay (5Y)	<i>Yeah, because at school people call me names because I'm a different colour to everybody else. Has that happened to you recently? Yeah, but everyone is doing it just to pick on me, scared me and started calling me poo brains.</i>

Unsure

Lee (5H)	<i>No not really</i>
Suzi (5Y)	<i>I don't know. I don't think they do Maybe sometimes yeah.</i>

Negative

Matthew (5H)	<i>No</i>
Shaun (6A)	<i>No, I don't think anyone would dare to bully me ... I'm a brown belt in Karate</i>

Appendix 21: Why children bully: derived from questionnaires	
<i>Do you think there are pupils in your class who bully, nasty tease or both to other pupils? If 'yes' why do you think they do it?</i>	
Reciprocity	<i>Beacos other peple bully them and they bully bake (501)</i>
	<i>Because the other person inoys them (503)</i>
	<i>Because they push them (504)</i>
	<i>To get there own back (520)</i>
	<i>Because the other persen bullys them (517)</i>
	<i>Because people pick on him too (548)</i>
	<i>Because they get on there nervz and call them names (521)</i>
	<i>Because x is always picked on because she is just horrid she takes over everything (525)</i>
	<i>Because others have pick on them (609)</i>
Payoff	<i>Becase they want to know that they are winning and making you upset (502)</i>
	<i>To annoy (512)</i>
	<i>To get atechen (516)</i>
	<i>I think they do it because they think its clever (551)</i>
	<i>They do it to see you get upset (614)</i>
	<i>Because they like to do it (615)</i>
	<i>Because they think they are strong so they show off and act cool (508)</i>
	<i>To get peoples atention (635)</i>
	<i>Becus they want to get peopels atentyen 637</i>
	<i>Just for the sake of (510)</i>
	<i>Because they think it's fun (628)</i>
	<i>He does it to make other people laugh (652)</i>
Victim centred	<i>Because they do not like that person (524)</i>
	<i>Maybe they don't like them or it could be a case of blackmail (527)</i>
	<i>Because thay don't like you or because of your looks or tast (606)</i>
	<i>Lots of people bully x because he's got spots (627)</i>
Exhibition of power	<i>Some people are horrible because of their size if there bigger and smaller (530)</i>
	<i>So they can show off at how good they are at teasing and stuff (534)</i>
	<i>Because they think they are strong so they show off and act cool (508)</i>
	<i>Because they think they are big to do it in front of there friends (601)</i>
	<i>She wants everybody to think shes hard (604)</i>
	<i>They think there so good but there not there tight (610)</i>
	<i>Because he call you names and takes the (612)</i>
	<i>They can make them cry or fell inportunt 617)</i>
	<i>So they feel important (619)</i>
	<i>Because they think their hard and they can get away whith it (620)</i>
	<i>Because big people sometimes pick on little people (649)</i>
	<i>Because they think it is big and clever (65)</i>
Boredom	<i>Because the bullies have nothing else to do (543)</i>
	<i>Because they have nothing to do so instead of playing nicely they be ignarent and bully (526)</i>
	<i>Because the bullies have nothing else to do (645)</i>
Unsure	<i>I don't know (519)</i>
	<i>I don't know (537)</i>
Lonely	<i>Because they have no one to play with so they want to have a bit of a laugh (522)</i>
Intrinsic evil	<i>Because they are nasty (546)</i>
	<i>Because they are nasty or do somthink horrible to them (511)</i>
	<i>Because they are nasty people or they engoy doing it (513)</i>
	<i>Because they are meen (622)</i>

Appendix 22: Reasons why children are picked on: derived from questionnaires	
<i>Do you think there are pupils in your class who are bullied, teased nastily or both by other pupils? Why do they get picked on?</i>	
Physical attribute	<i>People pick on aaaa because they say that he's a cry baby and they pick on bbbb because they say she's skinny (624)</i>
	<i>Because some people cant do things as well as others (507)</i>
	<i>Because she is very skinny (626)</i>
	<i>Because he smells abit and he is dirty (602)</i>
	<i>Because there small, fat, have loads of things, not popular (608)</i>
	<i>Beacause the buleas think there so good and the victim is usualy smaller (610)</i>
	<i>Because he's poor and hes got exma (604)</i>
	<i>Because he is fat (520)</i>
	<i>Because most people thin that xxxx is fat but she's my best friend (530)</i>
	<i>Because of their size or skin or people think their smarter than them so their bigger and better and they think they have more right (522)</i>
	<i>Becous he comes from a different country (516)</i>
Emotional disposition	<i>Becasue they get in moods easley and they are small (537)</i>
	<i>Because they show off alot and can get into a mood easily (534)</i>
	<i>Because they are sensitive and don't pick up for themselves (601)</i>
	<i>Because he gets in big stress (644)</i>
	<i>Because people make fun of him and he kicks and hures them 646</i>
Retaliation	<i>Because she is bosey and she tell of people when thay wunt doing eneythick rong (532)</i>
	<i>Because she keps on teling of pepole (523)</i>
	<i>Because yyyy is so bosy and horrible to you she makes horrible remarks and is just a pain (530)</i>
	<i>Because sometimes they show off and lie a bit I know because someone in my class dose it and she all so dobs on people (526)</i>
	<i>Because they do it they anoy them they push them (621)</i>
	<i>Becouse he finks he is bett than pepiel and he is fat (519)</i>
	<i>Zzzz goes around making trouble (515)</i>
	<i>Because he picks on you first (612)</i>
	<i>For been stupid and showing off (635)</i>
Educational Problem	<i>Cccc gets picked because she can't read well (648)</i>
	<i>Because he is not very good at things and stuff like that (615)</i>
	<i>Because they are sometimes rubbish at work in class (618)</i>
Unclassified	<i>Because there is somethink about them that they don't like (511)</i>
	<i>Because they don't like that person (639)</i>
	<i>Because some people hate over for no resend (625)</i>
	<i>Because they are girls and boys think there better and stronger when they are not (508)</i>
	<i>Becase the people that pike on them carnt get there on way (505)</i>
	<i>Because they got in the way of a ball (504)</i>
	<i>I think a boy in our class gets pickid on because he is new we let him play at playtimes (503)</i>

Appendix 23: Involvement in Bullying: Class 5H: derived from interviews

	<i>Named by pupil as having bullied</i>	<i>Named by pupil as having been bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had been bullied by</i>
Scott	Matthew, Kevin	Kevin		
Paul		Kevin	Kevin	
Kevin				Matthew, Lee
Jessica	Lee, Kevin	Kevin		Kevin
Matthew				
Lee	Matthew	Kevin	Kevin	
Max	Kevin, Jamie	Kevin	Matthew, Liam	
Victoria	Lee	Kevin, Matthew	not specified	Ellen, Adele
Leanne	Lee, Jamie, Kevin Matthew	Kevin		
Denise	Kirsty Kevin	Kevin		
Melanie	Lee, Leanne, Kevin	Victoria		Kevin
Jamie	Lee, Kevin	Kevin		Lee
Crystal				
Noel	Kevin			
Pauline				
Ellen	Adele, Kirsty, Leanne, Crystal	Georgia		
Rachel	Paul	Melanie		
Adele				
Claudia				
Christine				
Abigail		Kevin		
Kirsty				not specified
Janet		Kevin, Victoria		
Douglas				
Ross			Jamie	
Georgia	Lee, Jamie, Max	Kevin		Adele, Victoria, Kirsty, Pauline
Adele				
Liam				
Naomi		Kevin, Paul	Rachel	

Appendix 24: Involvement in Bullying: Class 5Y: derived from interviews

	<i>Named by pupil as having bullied</i>	<i>Named by pupil as having been bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had been bullied by</i>
Billy				Eileen
Harriet			Jack	
Hilary				
Brian		Edward		
Derek		Edward		
Keith	Derek	Edward		Edward
Olivia		Derek, Edward		Barbara, Wendy
Jack				Eileen
Susi	Olivia	Barbara		
Vanessa	Olivia			
Steve	Keith, Derek, Ron Peter	Edward, Derek		
Kim				Eileen
Eileen	Billy, Harriet	Edward		
Sarah-Jane		Edward	Olivia	
Jackie	Tony	Edward		
Raymond	Ron, Raymond	Edward	Edward	
Edward		Billy, Derek		Keith, Peter
Rod				
Tony	Peter		Cyril, Edward	
Lindsey	Keith	Edward		
Peter	Derek		Edward	
Lisa				
Joseph	Tony	Edward		
Barbara	Olivia	Edward		
Ron	Steve, Keith	Edward	Edward	
Terry	Raymond, Steve, Ron, Ashley	Edward		
Wendy				
Ashley	Keith, Peter	Edward		
Rod				
Colin		Edward		
Cyril	Eileen	Tony		
Kay				
Sharon	Eileen	Edward		

Appendix 25: Victoria's story as told by Mr Hogan (Int 1)

There was a case where Victoria got herself in a real state a few weeks back. She was really upset. To recall the incident, it was a case of the usual group, Pauline, Victoria, Ellen and Kirsty, that group. ... There was a lot of falling out, a lot of bickering. ... There was a lot of aggro going on and I was on duty in the playground and Victoria ... no, one of the children came up to me, it was Ellen. She had had money taken from her drawer or pencil case and she had found it in Victoria's bag in the cloakroom. Next I had Victoria coming up to me absolutely in tears, saying "I've been accused of taking this money and it wasn't me and I didn't do it". Absolutely distraught and I perceived right from the start she was being set up. I said "I'm not dealing with it now but we will sort it out. Don't worry about it." I had a word with Mr Benjamin and said I'd like him to come up and have a chat with them as well. He actually did come up and have a quite chat amongst the girls by which time I had done a general chat to the class about how this sort of thing was just not on, usual line about living and working together. One group was trying to set up another group or give another person the blame. I dealt with it rather than deal with the actual incident ... It occurs intermittently and over a period of time it is something that reoccurs. You also get the same complaint, very much of the same group of children from the different teachers who take this class. If ever I am away the supply teacher who comes in says I had a certain problem. I say "right I can tell you who is involved." Yes they are the four or the five whatever. It certainly worse when I am not there.

Appendix 26: Reasons offered for why Edward was bullied.

Name	Comment
Eileen	<i>Well people say he has got fleas and say he is ugly ... but when it gets to any of the girls they stop because Edward always starts to cry</i>
Brian	<i>I don't know. Cos he hasn't got any friends and stuff like that.</i>
Derek	<i>Well some friends of mine go round picking on him. They call him names like 'xxxxxx' (withheld as identifier) and that 'yyy' and pick on him and call him 'zzzz' something like that, any rude names Cos they think it's funny. No, he goes off crying.</i>
Peter	<i>Cos everytime he gets touched he goes off crying and that, like we say "you can't play" and he goes off putting his hands in his pockets, facing down and kicking little stones on the way.</i>
Raymond	<i>Mr Yates says he does it because he wants us to get into trouble and stuff like that</i>
Lindsey	<i>I don't know because like he always, when the kids are on the carpet, he like sneaks up on to the chair when the teacher is not looking and we go 'Edward has done something' and he says he didn't do it and they go 'Edward you did.</i>
Steven	<i>When he gets home he sits under the table and cries.</i>
Sharon	<i>I think cos it's where he comes from, where he lives, I don't know why but people just don't like him I think he smells and things like that ... sometimes I'm a bit horrible to him but we all are ... it's just a joke.</i>
Ashley	<i>Sometimes it's wet play in school, people throw things at Edward and go up to him and sat - they touch him and say - pass it on to another person and say 'fleas'</i>
Ron	<i>People call him names. Well I do sometimes, cos he annoys me ... I think it is because he has got eczema and I think people kid him because of that.</i>

Appendix 27: Involvement in Bullying: Class 6J: Nominations derived from interviews

	<i>Named by pupil as having bullied</i>	<i>Named by pupil as having been bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had been bullied by</i>
Lorraine			Unspecified	Gordon (ex-pupil) Amanda (6A)
Wasim	Lorraine Amanda (6A)		Robin (6A)	Robin (6A) Gordon (ex-pupil)
Charles				
Rebecca		Julie (6A)		Unspecified
Darren				
Mandy				Unspecified and in the past
Debbie			Carly, Mandy and Linda	Karen, Carly, Lorraine
Andrea		Rebecca		
Martin			John	John
Belinda	Sandra, Linda		Martin Lorraine	Julie (6A)
Sandra				Lorraine
Karen				
Angela				
David				
Ricky			Sam, Robin (6A)	
Susie	Lorraine, Carly	Lorraine, Angela		
Karl				
Valerie			Lorraine	Lorraine
Carly			Debbie	Debbie
John				Martin
Linda				Lorraine
Nicola				Kerry (6A)
Sam			John, Martin	Garry (6A)

Appendix 28: Involvement in Bullying: Class 6A: Nominations derived from interviews

	<i>Named by pupil as having bullied</i>	<i>Named by pupil as having been bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had bullied</i>	<i>Stated that they had been bullied by</i>
Jacob				Garry Ricky (ex-pupil)
Kerry			Jenny	
Robin	Julie		Julie	Julie, Wasim
Amanda				Robin, Garry, David (6J)
Bruce	Gordon (ex-pupil)			Unspecified
Colette	Gordon (ex-pupil)			
Shaun				
Joanna				
William				Unspecified
Rhiannon				Gordon (ex-pupil)
George				
Garry			Sam (6J)	Sam (6J)
Carolyn				Julie
Miles				
Kathy	Julie		Julie	Julie
Jenny			Kerry	Kerry
Anna				
Julie				Joanna, Robin
Annette				
Jeff				Robin, Garry
Ian				

Appendix 29: Parent's responses on the importance of bullying for school: derived from questionnaires.

Do you think that bullying and nasty teasing in schools is an important issue?

All 15 respondents answered 'yes'

<i>No:</i>	<i>Reason</i>
1	<i>Because if not dealt with adequately children's education can suffer</i>
2	<i>Because if it is not checked out it can cause very much unhappiness and continue to do so, when the child becomes an adult violence is not acceptable</i>
3	<i>The poor approach by parents does little to discourage bullying. Teachers have had all means to punish offenders removed from them.</i>
4	<i>Because if anything is happening it should be brought to attention</i>
5	<i>I don't like to have to push my child to school. I want him to look forward to school. I want him to learn as much as he can. I don't want him to learn how to be a bully.</i>
6	<i>If it is not sorted out in the schools, the children (victims) will always think they are no good and the bullies will always bully.</i>
7	<i>Because it can damage a child mentally, especially at primary school age.</i>
8	<i>If the media is to be believed it is a problem that is increasing and therefore has to be addressed.</i>
9	<i>A child needs to feel safe and happy to go to school without any fuss.</i>
10	<i>It simply prevents from learning correctly and makes them less responsive to the teaching process which creates less well educated pupils which cannot be good for the country as a whole.</i>
11	<i>Because the victims confidence can be affected. Also there is the chance that they could become a bully themselves.</i>
12	<i>The attitude of some parents does little to show children this is not acceptable behaviour. Teachers have very few means of meaningful punishment</i>
13	<i>It affects work if the child is unhappy</i>
14	<i>It has to be given a high priority within the ethos of the school in order for children to understand bullying is not an answer to their own inadequacies.</i>
15	<i>Because bullying in any form goes against every principle by which I live my life and try to instil in my children.</i>

**Appendix 30: Pupils on the importance of bullying for schools:
derived from questionnaires.**

Do you think that bullying and nasty teasing is an important problem?

<p>Future consequences for/ impact on victim</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because if you don't try and deal with it they could live with it for the rest of their life (645) •because some people are bullied very badly (652) •It could leave people in hospital (539) •because its horrible for children who get bullied (604) •It could spoil your childhood life which is important (537) •because children aren't going to enjoy school so they will learn less •because you could grow up thinking that you are rubbish at some things (613) •because ...in some schools people have been taken to hospital (624) •because it can ruine people lives and wont be comfotable about coming to school (526) •because its horrible for children who get bullied (604) •because it rooens the pupils lives (616) •becaus people get put in hospital becaus of it (516) •because it upsets people so that they don't want to go to school (502) •because if children get bullyed they won't want to go to school (638) •because it will get serios and xxxx with there mum coming in (531) •becaus some people comit suwerside (607)
<p>Immediate physical/ social outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because people get huet (544) •because people get hurt (632) •because people get upset (549) •because people don't get on with one another (512)
<p>Description of the present</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because quite alot of people get bullied (528) •because thers lots of it (546) •because it hapins a lot (521) •becase lots of people have been bulled (505) •because big kids tease little ones (508) •because lots of people don't want to go to school any more (536)
<p>Moral judgement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because I think bullying and nasty teasing is not verey nise (523) •becasue it is naste (519) •becas buling is nasty (629) •because you should not bully (651)
<p>Impact on school culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because other niys people would have lots of bad fights (550) •because bullying might get worse (534) •because there is all the little children and they will (think) bulling is a good thing to do (530) •because all children have to try to get on or else no one would get on (522) •because people are falling out to often so it makes harder for the teacher to control you (621) •because all the pupils go to school (514) •because .. its not a good sign for the school (614)
<p>Random</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •because if it carrys on through the nation the whole world will die out (643) •I don't know but I just think it is (543) •I don't know (517) •you want us to (518)

Appendix 31: Parent's responses on understanding of the school's policy: derived from questionnaires.

What do you understand to be the policy of the school in dealing with such matters?

<i>No:</i>	<i>Reason</i>
1	<i>The school tries hard to make students aware of the unacceptability of bullying and to tell someone if a child has problems.</i>
2	<i>I understand they try to help children to be open about it and discourage bullying.</i>
3	<i>When they find out they attempt to do something.</i>
4	<i>The headmaster</i>
5	<i>No response</i>
6	<i>I don't know</i>
7	<i>That it is not taken lightly and that offenders will be dealt with.</i>
8	<i>As outlined in the 'Cluster' group leaflet (title then given)</i>
9	<i>Mr Benjamin, the headmaster, will try to talk reason to the children involved.</i>
10	<i>I have no idea, but I wish it was made publicly known</i>
11	<i>Taken very seriously and dealt with immediately</i>
12	<i>To report any incidents to the teacher so they can take some form of action.</i>
13	<i>If you inform the head he will deal with it.</i>
14	<i>Guidelines have been sent home informing parents and children. It is given a high priority.</i>
15	<i>To provide a safe and secure environment and to deal with any known incidents promptly and effectively.</i>

Appendix 32: Parents' responses on how well bullying was dealt with: derived from questionnaires

How well does the school deal with bullying and teasing?

'very well indeed', 'quite well', 'neither well nor badly', 'not very well' 'very badly' 'I don't know how it is dealt with'.

No:	Reason
1	<i>'quite well' – I think they are aware of the problem but do think perhaps the mealtime assistants pass it off easily</i>
2	<i>'quite well' – because that is what I think/hope</i>
3	<i>'neither well nor badly' – the teachers, instead of clamping down immediately, tend to wait for a couple of occasions just to ensure they are right</i>
4	<i>'quite well' – because my child has been happy as far as I know</i>
5	<i>'not very well' – they are not strict enough</i>
6	<i>'not very well' – the children in question were only isolated from other children for one playtime</i>
7	<i>'quite well' – because that is the response I got when the situation occurred</i>
8	<i>'I don't know how it is dealt with' – you only tend to get involved with school policy when it directly effects your own children</i>
9	<i>'quite well' – I feel there could be more discipline</i>
10	<i>'I don't know how it is dealt with' – because I have no idea how it is dealt with</i>
11	<i>'very well indeed' – because of experience</i>
12	<i>'neither well nor badly' – because they seem to wait and see how the situation develops instead of take immediate action</i>
13	<i>'quite well' – because it worked for me, but not for a couple of people I know who took their children to another school</i>
14	<i>'very well indeed' – because of my own individual experience</i>
15	<i>'I don't know how it is dealt with' - because although I have a leaflet on the school's policy on bullying. I have no knowledge of any incident in practice to form an opinion.</i>

Appendix 33: Summary of meeting with MTAs

They related that:

- There was not an extensive bullying problem although there was a number of pupils who were 'horrible' to them and each other. They felt that there was a persistent group.
- Pupils knew the limitations of their power – 'you're only a dinner lady.'
- There were places where bullying occurred more often especially behind a temporary classroom.
- It usually took the form of 'wind up teasing' rather than physical violence.
- They had not had any training nor did they meet with staff, but did report concerns to Mrs Fashin, who had a brief to oversee their welfare.
- Mrs Penfold and Mr Hogan were 'very firm.'
- They were concerned that bullies should 'not be treated carefully.'
- They were not classed as staff but felt like 'Mums that help and get paid for it.'
- Edward and Kevin received more negative attention than any other pupil from Year 5 and 6.
- The best source of support was each other but that a meeting with Mr Benjamin had been set up which was seen as positive as they felt that they 'were not told what to do.'

Appendix 34: Parents' views on MTAs: derived from questionnaires

Do you think that the Meal-time Assistants ('dinner ladies') could do more to help? (If 'yes') Please give reasons.

Category	Response
Critical/ Interventionist	<p><i>Some mealtime assistants are under the opinion that discipline is nothing to do with them. Bad attitude. (Q3)</i></p> <p><i>Some mealtime assistants do not take as much responsibility as they should for the discipline of the children (Q12)</i></p> <p><i>I think they tend to ignore it unless it gets physical and don't intervene enough. (Q1)</i></p> <p><i>Because I told my daughter to seek help from a dinner lady and she told her she would sort it out later. (Q7)</i></p> <p><i>I feel they turn a blind eye at most things for an easy life when they are informed of incidents they don't act often enough. (Q13)</i></p>
Sympathetic	<p><i>I am sure most MTAs miss half of what occurs at playtimes as the job of over seeing those amounts of people all at once would be quite daunting. (Q15)</i></p> <p><i>You cannot be watching each child all the time. There is not much you're allowed to do. You get cheek from pupils and if they are fighting it's not safe to get too close. (Q5) [ex MTA]</i></p> <p><i>No as they have no real authoritative role. (Q6) [ex MTA]</i></p> <p><i>Some dinner ladies have the patience to listen and try and sort out problems and some don't. (Q9)</i></p>
Non Interventionist	<p><i>I feel that the role of the MTAs is not to get involved with dealing with such problems. However they are important as observers and should liaise with teachers. (Q8)</i></p> <p><i>I don't believe MTAs are trained to do so although they could also pass on any information to appropriate teachers. (Q10)</i></p>
No view	<p><i>I don't know. (Q2)</i></p> <p><i>I'm not really able to make comment on the job they do. (Q14)</i></p>

**Appendix 35: Pupils on how MTAs could do more to help:
derived from questionnaires.**

Do you think that they could do more to help? If 'Yes' what do you think they could do?

Category	Response
Inert or Uncaring	<p><i>Whenever I get hurt the dinner ladies don't care a bit and that really worries me. (550)</i></p> <p><i>They do not do anything. (508)</i></p> <p><i>They don't really do anything. (644)</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes when I ask a dinner lady they sometimes don't listen. (503)</i></p> <p><i>They just walk around blind as bats. Someones had a fight right in front of Miss X before and she didnt notice. (652)</i></p>
Limited or Ineffective action	<p><i>All they do is stay away from her or him and it doesn't work. (623)</i></p> <p><i>They are cross with the people you tell and say stop telling tales ... take more action. (620)</i></p> <p><i>Because they tell you to stop telling tales ... send them to Mr Benjamin. (631)</i></p> <p><i>Because they only deal with fights. (606)</i></p> <p><i>Because they just say stop it and then go away. (512)</i></p> <p><i>Because they just come around collecting rubbish (516)</i></p> <p><i>Well all they do is say don't do that. (617)</i></p> <p><i>They don't really have a big part. (633)</i></p> <p><i>They could do something about it, not just say go away. (509)</i></p> <p><i>Look more to the dinner lin ... pepel go in the lin and push in (501)</i></p> <p><i>All they say is don't go near them or say to the person who bullied don't do it again. (526)</i></p> <p><i>All they are just saying tell Mr Benjamin .. they could help themselves. (527)</i></p> <p><i>They could listen to you and take more notice and sort out the probelms(525)</i></p>
Change attitude	<p><i>I think the dinner ladys could be nicer to the people who were bullied. (604)</i></p> <p><i>They could do more to help by being a bit more stricter. (643)</i></p>
Improved Communication	<p><i>They could talk to them both together and sort it all out and try to make every one in the school befriends. (621)</i></p> <p><i>They say go away stop telling tales ... see the child and talk to him. (630)</i></p> <p><i>They dot tell are teshher (642)</i></p>
Under resourced	<p><i>They should have more dinner ladies. If there was more dinner ladies, one could stop fights and others could watch. (612)</i></p> <p><i>Have at least 5 more dinner ladies at least. Put more of them wher bullying takes. (624)</i></p>

Appendix 36: Pupils on how pupils themselves could do more to help : derived from questionnaires.

Do you think that pupils themselves could do more to help? Why do think that they could more to help? What do you think they could do?

Category	Response
Victim (Focus on pupil)	<p><i>Ignore them (502).</i></p> <p><i>If they get involved they themselves wil get in trouble so ... try to stay out of things (626).</i></p> <p><i>Defend themselves (508).</i></p> <p><i>Don't hit them back (649).</i></p> <p><i>Keep away from people that they dont like (512).</i></p>
Victim (Focus on adult)	<p><i>Tell a teacher and you would not get in troble they would. (528)</i></p> <p><i>Get the dinner lady strat a way (505).</i></p> <p><i>By telling a teacher so it might help. (503)</i></p> <p><i>Tell the teacher what is going on. (631)</i></p> <p><i>Dont get involed tell a teacher. (628)</i></p>
Bully	<p><i>They could stop teasing them about things. (530).</i></p> <p><i>Because if they are doing it they can stop. (536)</i></p> <p><i>Behave better. (504)</i></p> <p><i>Because their the people who do all the teasing and bullying. (522)</i></p> <p><i>They could try to stop ... try not to bully as much. (615)</i></p> <p><i>Because it is the pupils that are doing it (514).</i></p>
Bystanders Intervention	<p><i>They sometimes just watch the bullying happening ... they could tell the bully that what he or she is doing is not clever. (601)</i></p> <p><i>They could go round and help the teachers find the bullies. (604)</i></p> <p><i>Have a school ptrole so some could go around and if they see bulllys tell a teacher. (609)</i></p> <p><i>Because they just stand as an audiance and look ... be realy good and nice to the persone whos upset. (633)</i></p> <p><i>They cood do more. (617)</i></p> <p><i>Because they could become friends with the preson who gets bullied or hurt (639)</i></p>
Focus on Relationship	<p><i>Because they could make shore they don't brake up so that they would make everyone stop bullying. (621)</i></p> <p><i>Because children incuredge people. (624)</i></p> <p><i>They could become freinds and stop arueing. (640)</i></p> <p><i>Make friends. (630)</i></p> <p><i>Seperate them selvs (635).</i></p>

Appendix 37: Parents on how children could help themselves: derived from questionnaires.

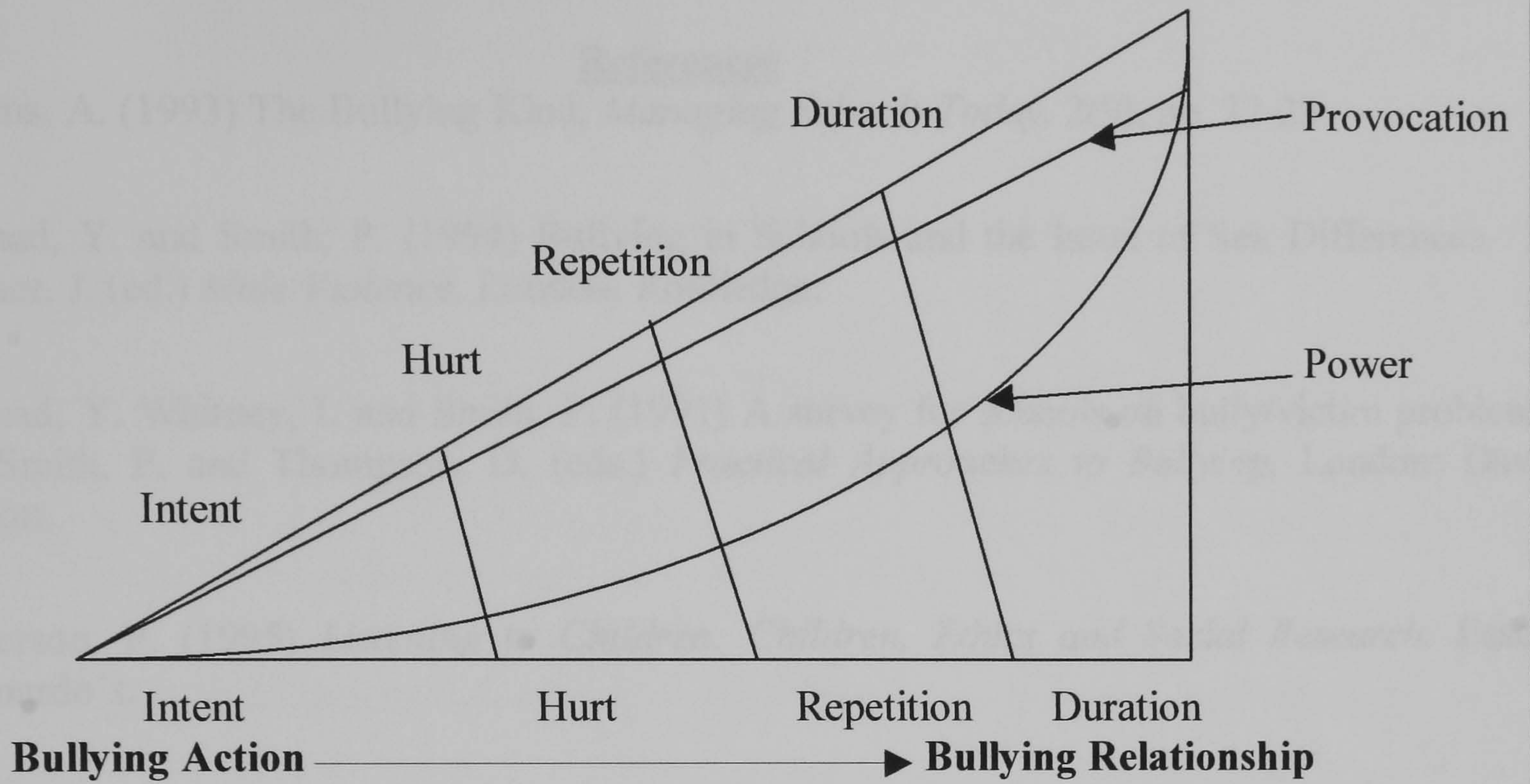
Do you think that pupils themselves could do more to help? Please give reasons.

<p>Telling culture</p>	<p><i>Tell teachers or parents. (Q3)</i></p> <p><i>Pupils should be taught to tell their teachers as soon as an incident has happened. (Q 10)</i></p> <p><i>Quite often it turns into gangs so they should not get involved and tell the teachers. (Q 12)</i></p> <p><i>I feel that it should be known that a child can help by informing someone and not get into trouble by doing so or be ignored (Q 13)</i></p>
<p>Moral stance</p>	<p><i>Children need to know to bully is wrong. (Q 1)</i></p> <p><i>I feel that it is important that children are aware that bullying, nasty teasing etc is unacceptable in school and that they are comfortable with dealing with such problems. (Q 8)</i></p>
<p>Assume responsibility /take positive action</p>	<p><i>To be aware of what is going on around them and also to have the courage in certain circumstances to not go along with the crowd but be prepared to take positive action. (Q15)</i></p> <p><i>By taking responsibility for their actions and the effect it has upon the feelings of others. (Q14)</i></p> <p><i>The older children could be made aware of school procedure for bullies and they themselves could isolate the person (Q6)</i></p> <p><i>Some children need to have more patience and understanding of other's problems. Not to tease if others are fat, spotty or poorly dressed. (Q9)</i></p>

Appendix 38: Outcomes from the Research.

Writing	Unpublished paper BERA, 1996, <i>Parental perspectives on bullying in a primary school</i> University of Lancaster. Bound into thesis.
	<i>Understanding and Countering Bullying: A Guide for Schools.</i> To be published by Torbay Local Education Authority (Spring 2002). Bound into thesis.
Teachers/ Lecturers	30 'M' level credit Masters level module <i>Understanding and Countering Bullying in Schools</i> undertaken throughout the South-West region. The module has successfully recruited on ten occasions with venues including Barnstaple, Exeter, Exmouth, Torbay, Taunton, Plymouth.
	Masters Dissertation for MEd award supervised to completion in 1999. <i>An Investigation into the Necessity and Practicalities of Establishing Intervention techniques to Counteract Bullying in Further Education.</i>
	'Best Practice Research' scholarship supervised that focused on setting up and training peer support group in a secondary school with its aim of <i>Enhancing understanding of the impact of bullying at the age of transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3</i>
	Conference paper: <i>Approaches to Countering Bullying in the United Kingdom</i> , University of West Bohemia, Plzen, 1999.
	Undertaken numerous 'Continuing Professional Development' sessions that have varied in length from a half day to a series of twilight sessions. Perhaps the most significant was the opportunity to address the headteachers who had been responsible for the reviewing the 'Cluster' group policy
Pupils	Worked with Year 10 pupils on peer support programme
	Supported Year 9 group in developing questionnaires
	Various school assemblies and work with groups
Learning Support Assistants	Over 20 whole day 'Professional Development' sessions as part of the University of Plymouth: Certificate in Higher Education.
Students	Various hall lectures plus sessions on <i>Approaches to Research into Bullying</i> for students on the University of Plymouth, Certificate in Education
Governors /parents	Workshops with Governors and Parents groups from both primary and secondary schools. Parents 'drop-in' sessions.

Appendix 39: A model for understanding bullying



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Bound in Materials

- 1) Understanding and Countering Bullying: A Guide for Schools (Torbay LEA)**

- 2) Parental perspectives on bullying in a primary school (Paper presented to British Research Association, Lancaster 1996)**

Torbay LEA

*Understanding
and
Countering*

Bullying

*A guide
for schools*

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Introduction

This book is designed for teachers and teaching assistants in schools. It aims to raise awareness and help to develop effective approaches to one of the main social problems experienced by pupils in schools, that of bullying. Despite remaining a key focus issue for over a decade, bullying continues to be experienced by many pupils in schools and provides problems for teachers in their aim to raise standards. One of the benefits of the relatively recent interest has been the encouragement that pupils now receive to speak openly about bullying, thus countering what was often seen as a secretive matter. However, with a more open approach comes a demand that action be taken and be seen to be taken. Schools are now required to have specific anti-bullying policies in place.

The contents of the book are designed to increase awareness of bullying and to provide materials that support anti-bullying strategies. They aim to offer ideas for those who work in schools and have already addressed bullying as well as those who have yet to develop policy and practice in the area. The content is based on many years of research into pupils', teachers' and parents' perceptions of bullying and I am also indebted to those who have joined me on courses and the full Masters level module 'Understanding and Countering Bullying in Schools', many of whom are teachers in Torbay.

Numerous researchers and writers have tried to quantify the size of the bullying problem and sought to focus on measuring how many children are bullied and how many perpetrators of bullying there are. Included in the principles that inform what follows are beliefs that:

- Bullying is a whole school matter and that any anti-bullying approach should step beyond those pupils who are directly involved. Everyone has a part to play in countering bullying in schools.
- Measuring levels of bullying help to monitor the effectiveness of a policy, but bullying is a qualitative experience and even one incident can have a major impact on a child, those who know about it and the school itself. A single incident is, therefore, one too many.

What is bullying?

Bullying is extremely hard to define with any accuracy and many leading writers on the subject have attempted to do so but without consistency. What has been achieved is the development of a vocabulary that helps staff and pupils to formulate their own definition and helps to distinguish between bullying and other aggressive actions. I do not intend to offer a specific definition here, indeed I do not possess one, but instead I suggest that the process of working towards gleaning pupils' understanding helps to inform their thinking. Perceptions on the meaning of the term 'bullying' vary and what may be important is that they are brought out into the open. For example, younger pupils when asked what they understand by the term bullying often list events that they have either experienced or witnessed, whereas adults usually try to find a sentence or two that embraces their understanding. Some who define focus on a narrow range of behaviours usually physical or violent in nature, others take a wider approach that includes intimidation and social exclusion. There are those who would include racially and sexually motivated aggression as bullying and those who would see it as a separate and distinctive form of abuse. Such differences may inhibit the development of policy and practice and therefore exploring the meaning of the term 'bullying' through the 'scenarios' offered later may prove helpful in raising awareness and discerning meaning.

In attempting to help clarify what bullying is some writers have offered models of bullying that seek to differentiate between its various forms. Olweus (1993) talks of 'direct' bullying which is that carried out face to face and 'indirect' bullying which is more subtle and usually involves a third party eg exclusion or rumour spreading. Bjorkqvist et al (1992) distinguish between 'direct physical' (punching, kicking and pushing) and 'direct verbal' (name-calling) and adds 'indirect aggression' (rumours, social exclusion and anonymous notes). Rigby (1996) focuses on the issue of intent in his distinction between 'malign' bullying, which is premeditated and intended, and 'non-malign' which is 'mindless' and considered by the perpetrators to be harmless or just a game. In his discussion of 'non-malign' bullying he includes a notion of 'educational' bullying in which adults, such as teachers, cause hurt, yet their motive was to do little more than correct errors in work. While the differences between the forms of bullying are of interest they seem to avoid one key area, that of the hurt felt

by the recipient. The form of bullying that the bully carries out may matter less than the hurt it causes as some children may prefer physical hurt to social exclusion or name-calling as the 'bruises' that result from the less direct forms can last longer.

A model of bullying

Rather than become embroiled in a debate about what bullying is I should like to offer the following model that has practical implications. Bullying can be about what pupils do to each other occasionally and, perhaps more seriously, it can be the centre or basis of a relationship. It is my view that the modern usage of the term 'bullying' embraces two key notions at opposite ends of a continuum and that most bullying and teasing incidents occur along that continuum. At one end of the continuum is the:

- Bullying *action* where behaviours that could be defined as bullying take place only occasionally and may not always have a lasting impact upon the relationship or do not provide the sole basis for that relationship. Nonetheless to ignore such behaviours could mean that it is not long before a bullying relationship becomes established.

At the other end is the:

- Bullying *relationship* where the relationship between pupils is based upon one or more pupils having power over another and that nearly all actions by the powerful over the powerless are aggressive.

Intervention that only takes place once the relationship has been established may be too late.

Often adults get involved in trying to find out what happened after an incident, which can lead to a variety of versions or perceptions rather than the truth. One of the main benefits of the variety of definitions that exist is that they provide a vocabulary that permits an opportunity to explore the meaning children and adults attribute to the term 'bullying'.

The key words are:

- Intent
- Hurt
- Repetition
- Duration
- Power
- Provocation

Scenarios

What follows are a series of scenarios that can be used to explore the meaning that bullying has for pupils or staff. It may help to request placing the scenarios under three headings a) definitely bullying b) might be bullying c) not bullying. Key to the use of the scenarios will be the questions raised in the discussion and examples have been provided?

Intent

Danny spits into a can of lemonade and says that he will make Billy drink it

Danny spits into a can of lemonade and makes Billy drink it

Key question:	If bullying is defined by intent rather than the hurt caused is there any significant difference between the scenarios?
----------------------	--

Hurt

Karl can't read very well but is fine at most other areas of school work. Two girls call him 'thicky' to his face.

Karl can't read very well but is fine at most other areas of school work. Two girls call him 'thicky' behind his back.

Karl can't read very well but is fine at most other areas of school work. Two staff call him 'thicky' behind his back.

Key question:	Is it possible to be hurt indirectly by the words of others, even if they are never heard by the person being discussed?
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Repetition

Every time Jenny passes Adele she pulls her long hair. She knows that it hurts her.

Key question:	Can a single hurtful action be bullying or does it need to be repeated?
----------------------	--

Duration

David gets fed up with Nancy who has been teasing him since they were put into the same class. He lashes out at her with a pencil and cuts her forehead.

Key questions:	Is teasing over a period of time ‘bullying’? Has the term ‘bullying’ been associated more with physical acts than teasing and social exclusion?
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Provocation

John likes to gain the attention of his peers. Occasionally he does so by calling them names until they respond aggressively. He then tells the staff that he has been bullied.

Key question:	Give that the name ‘bully’ is often given to the person who has power over another, is John a ‘provocative <u>victim</u>’, which is a term used to describe such actions in the literature?
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Power

Andrew tells George that, if he does not give him his dinner money every Monday then he will beat him up.

Key question:	Does the above represent the kind of action that leads to one person having power over another or are there other, more subtle actions?
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It may be helpful examine a definition against the six components listed above and see whether it fulfils all of them or whether individual staff or pupils would prioritise them in the same way. They also may help to provide a structure for questions to those involved that avoid the search for what happened. The following are questions suggested by teachers and teaching assistants using the key components. They are just a starting point at gathering information, not perhaps the best way or the only way,

just the beginning of a discussion on the issue. However there is little attempt to get the information from the students about **what happened**, merely to check out how their interpretations match against notions of bullying?

Intent	<p><i>Was there a clear intention of the bully or bullies to hurt others?</i> <i>Question:</i> <i>To the Bully(B)</i> <i>What did you mean to do?</i> <i>What did you mean to happen?</i> <i>Did you mean to cause hurt?</i> <i>To the Victim(V)</i> <i>Did he/she mean this to happen?</i></p>
Hurt	<p><i>Did the victim of the bullying and teasing feel hurt by an act or the relationship that he or she has with a bully or bullies?</i> <i>Question: (to V)</i> <i>Has this hurt you?</i> <i>How has this hurt you</i> <i>Does B know that you are hurt?</i></p>
Repetition	<p><i>Was it more than a one off act?</i> <i>Question: (V)</i> <i>Has this happened more than once?</i> <i>How often has this happened?</i> <i>Question: (B)</i> <i>Has this happened more than once?</i> <i>How often has this happened?</i></p>
Duration	<p><i>Have the events been taking place over a period of time?</i> <i>Question: (V)</i> <i>How long has this kind of thing being going on?</i> <i>Question: (B)</i> <i>How long have you been behaving this ways towards V?</i></p>
Power	<p><i>Was there an imbalance in power or a feeling of powerlessness in the victim?</i> <i>Question: (V)</i> <i>How do you feel when you are in B's company?</i> <i>Question: (B)</i> <i>How do you feel when you are in V's company?</i></p>
Unprovoked	<p><i>Did the victim play any part in gaining the attention of the bullies?</i> <i>Question: (V)</i> <i>Did you do anything to make B notice you?</i> <i>Question: (B)</i> <i>Did V do anything to make you notice them?</i></p>

Where are we in our handling of bullying?

Before any consideration can be given to strategies that could be employed it is important for schools to consider where they are in dealing with the subject of bullying. This self-examination of current stances and practice leads to consideration of which anti-bullying strategies 'best fit' the kind of school or it may well be that anti-bullying strategies can help to change the school culture. For example, a school that is prepared to look to peer mediation to help to resolve bullying will be giving a clear message that countering bullying is everyone's responsibility and that pupils can be trained in skills that mean that they are given the power to bring resolution to the conflict.

There are 4 stages:

Stage 1: Denial

It is not a problem in this school in particular, it is endemic, part of growing up and therefore nothing to do with us.

Stage 2: Policy only

There is a policy, written following an 'Inset' day and occasionally waved in front of parents and Ofsted. Few people know what it says.

Stage 3: Practice added

Policy and practices are in place. Preventative strategies make bullying less likely and there are ways of dealing with it or perhaps

Stage 4: Highly motivated

The school has a clear policy and practices that all know, helped to create and feel ownership of, plus it self-monitors by gathering data about the experience of key players including parents. It acknowledges that there is bullying beyond the school where children spend most of their lives, but nonetheless combats it in school by constantly adapting, re-visiting and experimenting.

Anti-bullying strategies

These can be basically divided into two:

- First there are those that are designed to make school a safe place to be, that raise awareness and create a climate that is supportive and open.
- Second there are those that deal with bullying after it has happened.

What follows is not intended as comprehensive consideration of every way that bullying can be tackled but information and samples of approaches that staff can incorporate. There are many approaches but few have been researched to determine their efficacy and probably elements of most of them will have to be incorporated either implicitly or explicitly. It is important to determine which awareness raising and reactive components there need to be in the policy.

- 1) **Opening up the issue.** This provides an atmosphere in which bullying can surrender their secretive elements. It may include questionnaires or card sorts for younger pupils, circle times, bully boxes and working with parents.
- 2) **Opening up the issue** through the curriculum to establish and enhance pupil reflection on the effects of bullying.
- 3) **Whole school policy generation** and how this might be handled through professional development. What might be the role pupils and parents in devising and supporting such a policy?
- 4) **The Playground** such as ‘greening the playground’ and evaluating the roles of adults on the playground.
- 5) **After the act responses** from adults such as the ‘No-Blame Approach’ and the ‘Shared Concern Method’, ‘bully courts’, peer mediation, support and training for victims from peers and adults.

1) Opening up the issue

Gathering data on bullying in a school can be a valuable exercise in gaining a picture of the pupil experience and how effective a particular strategy might be. Devising and administering a simple questionnaire will not only provide data on what is happening in the classrooms, corridors and playgrounds, it can also be a way of involving pupils. There is a questionnaire included in this book and although it may not be the most sophisticated tool of its type or be without fault as a research tool, it has one advantage over other questionnaires - it was devised, administered and the data evaluated by pupils themselves. In carrying out this task, which followed a short input session on asking questions and constructing questionnaires, they were able to see for themselves what their peers were saying. It was an open, well-publicised piece of data gathering that had other merits that are mentioned in the section on the value of the curriculum. The questionnaire has been included as an example that is not designed to be photocopied, as the design and questions should come from the pupils themselves.

Effective use of 'Circle time' represents a safe and open environment in which to discuss bullying experiences and 'Bully boxes', ie boxes placed strategically around the school to inform staff in writing about bullying experienced without having to be seen talking with teachers, or indeed mentioning names, all serve to render the subject a more open one.

The above approaches are designed with pupils in mind. If there is to be a genuine openness in approaches then parents also need to be involved and this can represent a challenging, yet fruitful, part of the strategy. Holding parent workshops can be construed as 'talking up' a problem or, alternatively, can be perceived as another way of rendering policy and practice transparent. The danger of such workshops is that they only attract those who are, or have been, experiencing reported bullying by their children, when their appeal might be for all parents, given they too have a role to play. Two areas for discussion would be how bullying is identified at home and how to react to it in relation to the school's approach. The following pages offer starting points and can be photocopied for discussion between staff and with parents.

Signs that a pupil could be being bullied

What follows is a description of key symptoms for parents to look out for that may indicate that a child is being bullied. When sharing these with parents, staff in schools need to point out that many of these could mean other concerns, not just bullying, and could also mean nothing at all. For example a change in route could be simply being bored with the usual route. Key behaviours to watch out for are:

- 1) **Absence from school** through truanting, being unwilling to go to school or suddenly developing a sudden 'illness'.
- 2) **Problems with going to school** such as being frightened to walk to or from school, changing their route or asking to be driven to school when they are usually content to walk.
- 3) **Problems related to school** such as beginning to underachieve in school or involved in aggressive behaviour.
- 4) **Returning from school** with damage to clothes, property or school work or with unexplained scratches, bruises or cuts. They also return from school unusually hungry or ask for money as the bully has taken their dinner money.
- 5) **Changes in habits or behaviour** such as becoming surly or aggressive to other members of the family, especially siblings or becoming withdrawn, distressed, anxious or lacking confidence. Fear of the bully may lead to a refusal to say what is wrong.
- 6) **Serious problems** might include stammering, stop eating, threatening suicide, crying at night or nightmares and beginning to steal.

Advice for parents

Noting that their child might well be being bullied leads parents to react often with understandable panic. The following advice is designed to help them to keep calm about the situation and to consider what part they might play in resolving the situation.

- Count to one hundred and don't act in haste.
- Alert the school and arrange an appointment to visit. Think about whether your child's presence at the meeting will help.
- Contacting the school makes the issue more public and this, in itself, can help stop bullying, but your child may fear that it will make things worse.
- Gather as much information as possible and your own thoughts. Write it down.
- Try to avoid anger – there's enough aggression already.
- Ask what the school policy is (have you got a copy?).
- You may hear that your child is no angel, may contribute to the problem or even may have started the bullying. This does not alter your purpose and that is to contribute towards the ending of the bullying.
- Protection by adults may be required, but that is no real solution.
- Encourage the child to approach a teacher with whom they feel comfortable.
- Try to avoid holding family discussions within the hearing of the child.
- In your talks with your child emphasise that there is nothing wrong with them.
- Maintain a sense of hope and a sense of humour.
- Encourage activities that help the child to forget the bullying.
- Try to build their self-confidence.
- Maintain communication with the school even if the bullying stops – they need to know that what they did has worked.

What ideas you have found useful or heard that others have employed that have proved effective that you would add to the list?

2) *Opening up the issue through the Curriculum*

The term curriculum in this section refers to the National Curriculum and not the pastoral curriculum, although the ideas discussed could be applied to both. The subjects of the more formal curriculum present opportunities to consider bullying issues often in a wider context than the school. Here are some examples:

History provides an opportunity to consider those who have abused power

Drama offers the chance to enact bullying incidents and their resolution or otherwise (Casdagli and Gobey, 1990)

Mathematics is a chance to explore experiences of pupils through questionnaire has been described previously, but through Mathematics the data can be analysed and recorded graphically.

Art provides a vehicle for expressing feelings or in describing incidents through cartoons or photographs.

Music again presents the chance to express feelings through music and perhaps generating 'bullying raps'.

Many teachers use children's fiction to raise awareness and there is a wide range of literature available and catalogued for pupils of all ages (Stones, 1998). 'Bibliotherapy', as it has been called, has both disadvantages and advantages and highlights the importance of planning and linking the methods to the whole school context. On the negative side there has been little research into the efficacy of such approaches in changing the attitudes and values of pupils and where the focus is on the *message* of a book rather than the book itself, it could inhibit the sense of reading just for pleasure. On the positive side it permits identification with characters involved and insights into associated problems and dilemmas. If there is a therapeutic element it should lead a form of emotional release that implies that it may need to be used by a counsellor rather than a teacher. A further dilemma for teachers is whether they

should read stories about bullying to whole classes in which there may be bullies and victims.

American research, (Oliver, Young and LaSalle, 1994) looked at a series of books about bullying and noted that in seven out of twenty-two violence was a solution to bullying. In these cases a weaker victim attempts to shrug off the negative attentions of a stronger character and does so by violence. They leave the scene beaten up but victorious with a new sense of confidence. In a further eight stories where avoidance was employed it was deemed as 'merely postponing the inevitable'. In remaining stories numerous short and long-term strategies were employed and ideas explored. For example, the bully starts the bullying in the class, but after the first victim disappears, she changes from bully to being bullied. In another the bully, who has had a 'raw deal' from life eventually injures her baby sister and is taken into custody but meets a new, equally disadvantaged, friend who changes her perspective.

3) Whole school policy generation

Why a policy is needed

- To provide a secure and safe environment for all pupils.
- To break down the supposed secretive nature of bullying.
- To generate a supportive ethos.
- To oppose the view that bullying is an inevitable part of school life.
- To involve all the school in arriving at a consensus about definition, countering approaches and the nature of pupil/pupil and teacher/ pupil relationship.
- To be proactive rather than reactive.

It needs to be constantly revisited, up-dated and all potential new members of staff should be informed about it at interview.

A whole school policy on bullying

Some fundamental decisions need to be made before such a process would begin, such as:

- What are the core values of the school? The 'mission' statement would incorporate a wide range of considerations: eg statements about encouraging friendship, support and co-operation, pupil involvement, how a safe environment might be created. The four stages mentioned earlier may provide a helpful framework here.
- How far is policy on paper seen around the school as a policy in practice, including staff-pupil and staff-staff relationships?
- Who will be involved in policy generation? If you go for an approach that gives power to pupils, they should be in on the policy formulation.
- What is approach of the staff? A policy devised because of external pressure distinguishes it from a policy based on an internal conviction that bullying in the school must be tackled.
- Will it stand by itself or will it form part of a wider behaviour/pastoral policy?
- How will it 'lock into' other policies and approaches?
- Will it incorporate awareness raising and preventative approaches as well as reactive elements?

The Bullying School

This exercise provides insights into how the whole school can create an atmosphere in which bullying is at best tolerated and at worst nurtured. It may be a way of beginning the journey of constructing policy and practice.

Your task is to devise a school that licenses bullying and teasing subtly, ie it perpetuates an ethos that permits bullying without appearing to counter contemporary initiatives. In doing this you should take the following into account:

- The school environment, the 'hidden curriculum' and the school ethos.
- School rules, traditions, practices and procedures.
- The authority structure.

- The relationship between school and community.
- Teaching resources.
- Teaching content.
- Whole school activities eg assemblies, camps, sports days etc.
- The school staff. Do we convey ‘bullying and teasing’ messages in our carrying out our role eg sarcasm, humiliating behaviour, derogatory names or unpleasant nicknames?

Having undertaken this focus on your own school and consider the following questions:

- a) How different are your decisions from your everyday reality?
- b) Is it possible to distinguish between those which create bullying and those which perpetuate bullying?
- c) What would a school that effectively counters bullying look like?
- d) How do we go about achieving the aspirations of (c)?

A pupil charter

One way of raising awareness and promoting positive pupil relationships has been the idea of a pupil charter that is embedded in ideas of pupil rights and responsibilities:

Rights such as:

- to *feel* safe at school as well as to be safe
- to be free from insult and negative teasing
- to be able to associate with other people for companionship and friendship
- to feel that possessions are safe –

therefore the responsibilities are:

- to ensure the safety of others;
- to ensure the safety of their possessions;
- to ensure freedom from teasing and name calling.

4) *The Playground*

Little is known about when children decide to 'pick on' their peers or when 'bullying relationships' become established and it may well be that these take place when the pupils are in the classroom. However, bullying is more likely to be acted out on the playground than any other place in the school. It is a place that possesses two contrasting images. In one it can be a wonderful part of the school life where children have fun and learn to socialise and, in the other, it can be perceived a centre of aggression and characterised by many pupils being unhappy as the expense of the pleasure of a few. Certainly it offers an arena where older or more powerful pupils can exert a negative influence over others.

Seeing bullying as a playground problem is simplistic. However, certain factors will influence levels of bullying, such as supervision and the playground environment itself. We need to examine the environment and when considering improvements it may be possible to ask the children to contribute to the design and function of the playground as part of their learning to use their power in a constructive way. Whilst it easy to say that some playgrounds get the playground bullying that the environment deserves, it has to be recognised that creating beautiful play environments may well be an expensive and time-consuming business. One subject that will always attract debate is the use of the playground for football and, although it is easy to decry it, especially as it often involves only boys, many playgrounds offer an environment which is of little use for anything else.

One crucial factor that can help influence bullying as a playground phenomenon is a skilled group of Meal-time Assistants (MTAs). They can be caught in the middle of the bullying problem in schools and, if we accept that bullying is a relationship issue, they need to be able to make relationships themselves and understand and be informed of the relationships between the children in their care. They are a group of people who may have low professional esteem and low pay and yet they possess enormous power and opportunity to bring positive change. The Elton Report (DES, 1989) acknowledged that lunchtime supervisors are both vital and neglected and that there was a need for them to be trained in behaviour management. Such training has been a

piecemeal process and has lacked coherence, which is surprising given that teachers often report that the worst part of the day, in terms of pupil behaviour, is after lunch. There seem to be three main problems:

a) Communication

This can be enhanced if they are given information about school matters or pupils experiencing difficulties and this takes that rare commodity - time. All too often their sole focus is the dining hall, the queue to get into it and then the playground. There are simple ways of improving communication such as:

- Information bulletins in which MTAs are included
- Their own notice boards
- Communication books
- Regular chances to meet with staff (not always the Headteacher)
- Ensuring that they are greeted and/or gathered together to report matters after their duty is completed
- Establishing an efficient system that deals with the absence of an MTA.
- Assigning MTAs to classes for a short time before or after lunch so that they begin to develop relationships and gain knowledge about concerns over particular pupils.

b) Lack of status or confusion over role

They can often find themselves contradicted, ignored and in receipt of mixed messages - are they members of staff, if so why don't they go to staff meetings? Certainly where there are meetings about behaviour they should attend and failure to invite them could be construed as a 'put down' by omission. They need to feel valued and supported and much can be done to improve their status such as to invite them on school trips and to attend key assemblies and other events. Confusion can develop over their authority, for example, who is in charge when pupils are eating with teachers? Here the teacher is often assumed to be in charge and this may be the case but nobody has told the MTAs. Another possible source of confusion can occur when children are allowed in the classroom during lunchtimes. It is essential that there are agreed roles and responsibilities.

3) **Lack of training**

Some MTAs receive formal First Aid training, but it is in the preventative sense that much more could be that done, for example they need to know what help a sick child needs - medication, prone to fits, child protection issues especially the bullying policy. Like other staff they would benefit from working on defining bullying, despite all the associated problematic elements mentioned previously, because it serves to develop consensus and involves them in the process. A valuable addition to training might include rehearsing opening sentences for intervention eg calmly stating:

‘What is happening here? Dean looks very unhappy’,

when the victim is too frightened to admit involvement

or:

‘I’m sorry to interrupt but I need Jenny to take a message for me’,

if there is a perceived need to gain more information or probe whether the game is that’s being played is safe yet avoid being blaming or judgmental.

They can also work with other staff to find the key areas of the playground where bullying takes place and they can work together on avoiding labelling children being involved in problem behaviour and not being problem children. Here is a checklist that aims to provide a starting point for approaches to avoiding ‘fanning the flames’ of aggression. It is not a complete or a fully comprehensive list but it serves to begin discussions and provide suggestions.

MTA checklist

- 1) Always try to keep calm, polite,
- 2) Encourage pupils and praise them
- 3) Value the friendship of any child
- 4) Listen well
- 5) Label the behaviour and not the child
- 6) Don’t rush to a scene too quickly where there are concerns as it transmits a message of panic
- 7) Try not to jump to conclusions
- 8) Avoid being sidetracked

- 9) Avoid sarcasm and put downs
- 10) Avoid threats - especially if they won't/can't be carried out
- 11) Avoiding using teachers as controls as it undermines your personal authority
- 12) Can a 'time out' system be set up?
- 13) Consider 'tracking' or 'shadowing' pupils who are of concern
- 14) If sanctions are used make sure that there is a hierarchy of them thereby avoiding using the most powerful 'weapon' first.
- 15) Catch pupils being good and tell them. Pass on information especially about good behaviour and let the children know it is passed on and valued
- 16) Join in a co-ordinated look at the playground and the games that children play
- 17) Try for 'win win' solutions as assertiveness techniques are important
- 18) Use yellow cards and red card systems. Whatever the reward or punishment system, ensure that they are agreed with teaching staff and in sympathy with what is happening elsewhere in the school.
- 19) Improve the quality of wet playtimes especially the notion of 'theme' rooms (breaks up the dynamics of the classroom relationships in which bullying may exist)
- 20) Finally, it is okay to ask for help when you need it and is certainly not an admission of failure

5: After the act responses

Working with the bully

Bullying is often perceived as being a problem that has an impact on three groups of pupils – bullies themselves, their victims and any bystanders. This denies the impact that bullying can have on the school as a whole and how important other groups can be in the resolution of the problem. The bully, victim and bystander model allows those outside the triangle to deny responsibility in countering bullying. Many groups are involved including:

- a) Those who know and are involved, but for whom the term ‘bystander’ might be an over-statement. They know what is going on and who are involved.
- b) Those who seek to exercise their power in the punishment of bullies and in doing so adopt methods that confirm that aggression and the abuse of power is a potent weapon.
- c) Those who disempower victims of bullying by over-protection – the ‘rescuers’.
- d) Those who despite knowledge of the potential impact of bullying on learning, the feelings of others and the school ethos remain inert.

Olweus, (1993) has suggested that there is more than one type of bully and more than one type of victim. One of the more complex cases is the pupil who is bullied but invites that bullying – the ‘provocative victim’.

In terms of the traditional view of the ‘involved’, bullies often represent the major challenge to staff. It is important to consider whether any intervention leads to change in their behaviour or merely makes sure they are more careful and not caught in the future. Rigby (1996) talks of three approaches to dealing with bullies. First there is the ‘**legalistic**’ approach which, as the name suggests, invokes very clear actions that will be taken immediately once all the necessary information has been found. Second is the ‘**moralistic**’ form that focuses on compliance based on an acknowledgement that it is wrong to bully. Finally, there is the ‘**humanistic**’ way where there is regard for the bully, but not for their behaviour. Attempts to change the behaviour of the bully are made through counselling. The following table outlines the potential merits and negative features of each approach.

	Positive	Negative
Legalistic <i>Rule based</i>	Can be quick and demands no counselling Sends a clear message of non-tolerance Generates the semblance of justice	Seeking the truth is very time consuming Dependent on efficient surveillance Can fail to have an impact upon the worst bullies who redouble efforts to generate fear in 'tellers' Rarely leads to reconciliation.
Moralistic <i>Applies a moral pressure</i>	Appeals to moral rightness Promotes the values of the school	No engagement with the values of the bully Bully cynically concedes only to bully again in harder ways to detect
Humanistic <i>Understands the perpetrator not as a bully but as person</i>	The bully is perceived as a person not a category Invites co-operation with the counsellor The bully really wants to change not just to comply	Can appear a soft option for parents Some bullies are very manipulative and can appear to 'play the game'

It may be that a school uses the three categories as a basis for decision-making on how they view bullies. One of the criteria for the choice could be whether this was the first reported incident or whether the perpetrator has been involved in many incidents or whether it is a 'bullying action' or 'bullying relationship'. All the above approaches are focused on the bully and indicate that responsibility for resolution rests solely with the bully, which may be a narrow and ultimately fruitless approach.

Working with the victim

The aim of the support group is to move the victims from being victims to becoming members of the non-bullied group through teaching skills for effectively coping with bullying, encouragement, mutual support and friendship. One of the dilemmas that schools will need to face here is that victim support may require change from those

pupils who are 'picked on' and perhaps these pupils could argue that they have the right to be the way they are and that it is the bully who should change.

In terms of supporting victims it may well be that this group has a desire to change their ways of ways of interacting and new skills may enhance self esteem damaged by persistent bullying. Changing bullies could be more difficult than teaching victims strategies as some bullies have had their behaviour rendered legitimate by parents and others who bully and even by teachers who have allowed the bullying to go on uninterrupted. They have learnt that their behaviour brings reward that can be psychologically harder to change.

Arora (1991) advocates that victims should meet together rather than mix with bullies because there may be a need to teach these pupils assertiveness skills and self-protection which is not always the requirements of other groups. The setting up of the group should be handled carefully so as not to dent the already low self esteem of victims. Parents should be informed because this is outside the normal curriculum and teachers should also be informed in order that they can contribute information and observations.

The sessions themselves should be in a relaxed venue and the training for victims could include:

- how to be positive yet avoid boasting;
- friendship maintenance;
- conflict resolution strategies;
- awareness of feelings and emotions of themselves and others;
- positive body language;
- relaxation training;
- assertiveness skills including techniques such as 'fogging'.

'Fogging' responses to aggressive name-calling is not as easy a skill to learn as it may appear. There is a need for support and training, a recognition that it might, if not handled appropriately, add 'fuel to the fire'. It requires a degree of confidence and the ability to give a message with body language that matches the verbal response. Here are some suggested responses from a group of Torbay teaching assistants that I have worked with.

‘pig face’	saying nothing just snort
‘dumbo’	just watch me fly
‘stupid’	it’s only Monday what do you expect?
‘wimp’	a weak tree bends with the wind, but it doesn’t snap
‘metal mouth’	I’m auditioning for James Bond
‘ponce’	I’m using my feminine side to attract girls
‘pompous git’	offer name of current TV star
‘fatty’	my girl/boy friend calls them love handles
‘short ass’	looks at rear and says ‘is it’?
‘big ears’	I’m getting a part in Startrek
‘wog’	wonderfully optimistic girl or guy
‘four eyes’	all the better to see you with
‘creep’	I do sometimes but I usually walk

These are just a sample of what can be thought up in a very short time and it is also important to point out that not all the group who devised these retorts felt that teaching pupils such skills would inhibit the aggressive name calling that some of their pupils experience.

Before leaving discussion on those who are bullied it is important to consider a very challenge sub-group, mentioned previously, the ‘Provocative Victim’. These may be a key group of pupils if, indeed, they exist as a distinctive group, because they affirm the notion that bullying may not be something done to a person, but that there is an interactive element ie the victim contributes to the problem. They are characterised by both anxious and aggressive patterns noted in other victims (Olweus, 1993) and often behave in ways that cause irritation and tension around them.

They have been noted to be hyperactive and have problems with concentration. They possess an added danger in that they can provoke inappropriate behaviour amongst a high proportion of, or perhaps, an entire class. The consequence is that they lead to many pupils resorting to bullying behaviours when they are not normally considered to be bullies. They present specific challenges in the deployment of ‘Shared Concern’ or ‘No Blame Approaches’ which are based on developing empathy for those being bullied as these pupils may be hard to like. So to those approaches.

The Shared Concern Method and the No-Blame Approach

Two distinctive approaches to post-event intervention have been devised and deployed in schools. First there is Pikas's 'Shared Concern Method' and, second there is the similar 'No-Blame Approach' of Robinson and Maines. Both methods demand that teachers or other adults spend time working with the victimised, the bullies, and those who were nearby or were aware of what happened. They can be summarised in the following steps:

	<i>No-Blame Approach</i>	<i>Shared Concern Method</i>
Step	Action	Action
1)	interview with the victim	meet with the involved individually
2)	meet with the involved	interview with the victim
3)	explain the problem	establish if they contribute to problem
4)	share responsibility	meet with involved in a group
5)	ask the group for ideas	establish the shared concern for the victim
6)	leave it up to them	hold resolution meeting with all involved
7)	meet them again	meet them again

Any school thinking of exploring the value of either form of approach will need to read a more comprehensive version of the stages and think about the implications for the whole school.

It is not intended to offer further detailed descriptions of the approaches here except to highlight that both have as a basis:

- * Perceiving the perpetrator and those who are bystanders as a group.
- * A clear emphasis upon shared responsibility generated through a series of meetings.

- * The teacher functioning in a similar way in that their role is to gather data and to orientate the group towards the future. To that end there is minimal discussion of what happened or why it happened.
- * Working with groups in order to draw upon the group to change towards more positive interactions with the victim and therefore the assumption that the onus to stop the bullying does not rest with that victim.

However there are key differences:

- * The 'Shared Concern Method' is highly structured and scripted and, whilst the 'No Blame Approach' has very clear stages, the guidance given permits a more flexible approach.
- * In the 'Shared Concern Method' bullies are interviewed singly and before any meeting with a victim in order to counter accusations that the victim might have 'told' on them. With the 'No Blame Approach' the feelings of the victim are ascertained before a group meeting of the bullies and any pupils who were involved or nearby condoning the situation are highly likely to be present.
- * In the 'No Blame Approach' much is made of the feelings of the victim, and the transmission of those feelings to perpetrators,. With 'Shared Concern' the focus is on the action, 'some guys have been a bit tough on Darren' (Pikas, 1993).
- * Pikas commends his approach for pupils over the age of nine and in the case of group bullying which is often called 'mobbing' in his native Scandinavian. Robinson and Maines believe that their approach is suitable for 'one to one' bullying.

The 'No-Blame Approach' has been underpinned by a clear set of principles interwoven with some rejection of advice that the authors perceived as ineffective practice in dealing with bullying events. They disapprove of the need for full

investigation into what pupils say happened on the basis that teachers and other adults often receive the answers that the pupil think those adults want to hear (Maines and Robinson, 1992). Not only does the search for the truth lead to little more than perspectives of what transpired but it becomes an invitation for the perpetrator to offer a contradictory account in seeking to extract themselves from blame (Maines and Robinson, 1992). In the modern busy school, where time has become a rare commodity, the search for accurate accounts of incidents would seem counter-productive. We should ask ourselves whether we are going to spend precious time in tracing the origins of peer conflict and precisely and judiciously attributing blame or alternatively using the time to resolve the problem and bring about a lasting reconciliation between two or more students. What we need to know is whether a person has been victimised, who may be responsible and what is going to happen (Rigby, 1996).

The authors of 'No-Blame' condemn labels such as 'bully' and 'victim' being used beyond the literature on the subject. Deploying them in schools means that both terms can have a negative impact on pupils' self esteem and potentially have a negative impact on parents with whom schools may well need to work co-operatively (Robinson and Maines, 1997). They also reject much of the advice that urged change in the victim on the basis that it locates responsibility with them. They fear the impact on what may already be feelings of inadequacy (Robinson and Maines, 1992) and the urge to change behaviour rests with the wrong person. Recommendation of assertiveness training for victims cited elsewhere is open to criticism, not because such training is not helpful, but that it should form part of a social skills programme for *all* pupils, not just those who have become recipients of the attention of bullies.

Of all the theoretical stances behind 'No Blame' perhaps the most controversial is the urge, exemplified in the title, to abandon blaming bullies. Non-punitive behaviour management has been advocated elsewhere (Nelson et al., 1993) but in the context of bullying it may be more contentious. Given the emotions and pressures that discovery of bullying can bring, particularly from parents, not to punish but to work positively with bullies may be highly challenging.

Both of the above techniques have been employed in schools and case studies of their application have indicated that there appears to be merit in them, although research has been undertaken by advocates of the approach and there is a need for independent evaluation. Olweus (1993) has focused upon a lack of empirical evaluation, however difficulties in evaluating the success or otherwise of either approach, in any meaningful manner, render such evidence problematic (Ross, 1996). Improvements in incidence levels of bullying may be influenced by the fact that there is a clear, consistent approach, rather than the nature of that approach and, in any case, incidence levels alone appear a dubious barometer of success or failure for they say little about the qualitative experience of the pupils.

Other criticisms cited by Ross (1996) have centred, in the case of Pikas, on the claim that bullies have the potential for feeling guilty about their victims and apparent remorse felt by bullies was little more than a response to finding out that punishment was not involved.

Certainly there remain unanswered questions such as repair to relationship may be one facet of the matter, but the damage to property and repayment of extorted money provide concrete areas that have not been addressed in the literature. Nonetheless the encouragement of disclosure, countering of the secrecy and the knowledge that positive action will be taken without adult power being deployed in a negative way may have much to commend it. It certainly blends in with a view that in many cases, where pupils have employed the term 'bullying', difficulties can occur in identifying roles of key players.

The 'Non-involved'

There is no such thing since most pupils know about any bullying and they need to be 'mobilised' if schools are really to challenge bullying as an everyday part of life at school. Here are just two contrasting ways in which pupils who are neither bullies nor victims can be involved.

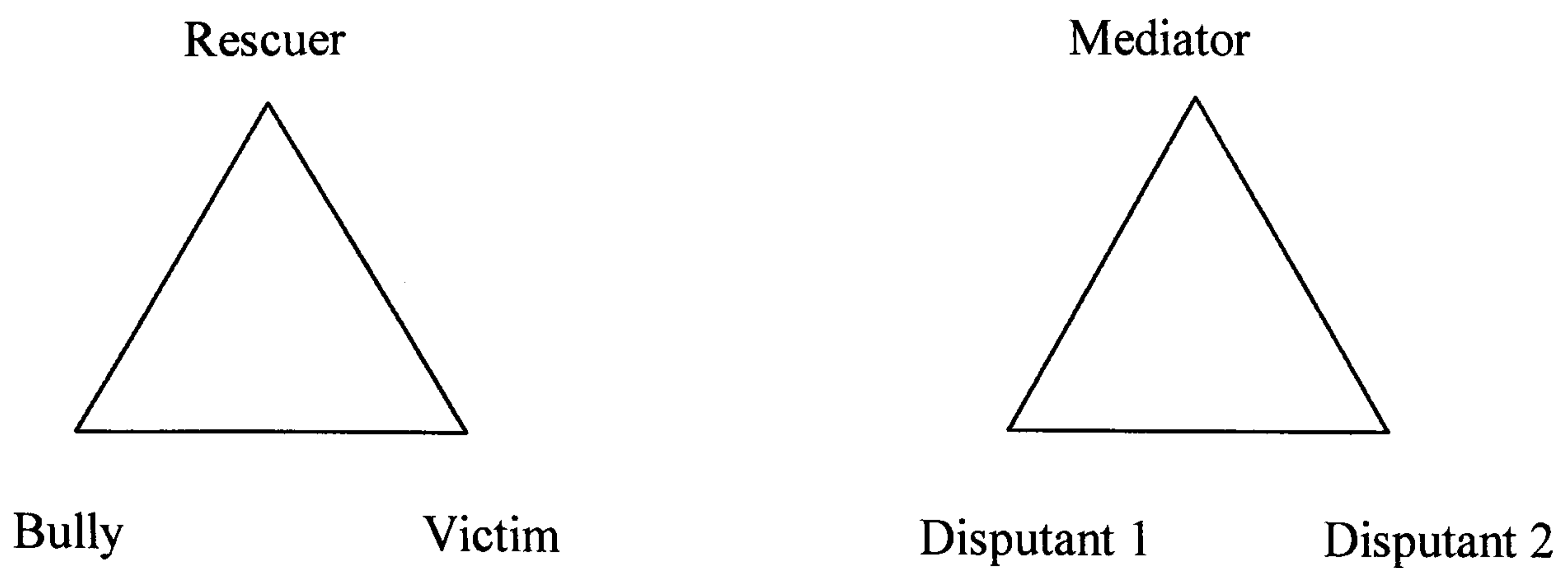
Peer mediation

Adults are often limited by the degree to which they can invade the world of children and deploying children to mediate in disputes, some of which may well be bullying, brings with it the mediator's own insights into pupil culture. It also says much about the core values that a school holds dear with its emphasis on wishing to empower pupils rather than provide quick fix solutions from above. Peer mediation says much about how we define bullying, for if power is one of the key components in a definition then teaching pupils to use power positively and seek solutions rather than fuel aggressive situations would seem sensible. It is also about involving the whole school, including the supposed 'non-involved' who, by remaining non-involved, may be considered as colluding with bullying. Indeed it says much about how adults in schools view pupils and their preparation for life in a democratic world.

In practical terms consideration needs to be given to the broader school setting. If a primary school has a well-established mediation system it is likely that the pupils involved will have social skills that are different from their peers in other neighbouring primary schools. When the time for transition to secondary education comes receiving schools need to know about these pupils and whether they will continue to deploy the skills of mediators who are likely to be confident in handling difficult situations within their own age group.

A second practical consideration is that peer mediation is not just about mediators but it is about the whole school and it will be demanding at first. Pupils must be trained and it may involve difficult processes and considerable effort and time. They can be taught the processes through role-play by observing the teacher and other pupils and learning the stages of mediation. It is a commitment for all concerned, but schools who adopt such an approach are likely to note increases in pupils' self esteem and social skills.

A further benefit of mediation is that it challenges the old model of bully, victim and the rescuer. It is often the case that, if the victim did not feel disempowered after the attentions of the bully, they will do after the rescuer has exposed their supposed inadequacies. Mediation is forward seeking, brings balance and calm to a dispute and is solution-focused rather than problem centred.



Bully Courts

‘Bully Courts’ begin with the investigation of any reported bullying and as a result of that investigation action to be undertaken by a court or panel of pupils. They replicate judicial courts and the pupils are given power to punish or dismiss their peers. One of the difficulties of such ‘courts’ is that they may be empowering pupils to use, and perhaps abuse power, over other pupils, albeit in a legitimate way. It may well be that ‘bully courts’ are not the best name but that ‘arbitration panels’ would be preferable.

One headteacher developed courts in her school (Brier and Ahmad, 1991) after she had established the extent of the problem through questionnaire survey. The pupils who emerged as members of the court were all from the non-bullied or victims and therefore no bullies infiltrated it. There was role-play for the members of the bench to prepare them and the bench consisted of two teachers and nine pupils. The pupils used such punishments as picking up litter and therefore acted as monitors of their own punishment. There were certain year groups that did not have the courts and they reported an increase in bullying whereas the year groups with courts reported a marked decrease, although we return to the idea that any action is perceived as positive. For bully courts to be employed the school should have a very strong anti-bullying policy which state clearly what powers the court has and recognises that it is *part* of a whole school approach not the school approach. A school is ready for bully courts when the whole school has grasped the notion that there are no such things as bystanders in bullying.

Conclusion

This book has been designed as a starting point for those staff in schools who wish to address the problem of bullying. It does not contain ‘the answer’ for there are many answers and much will depend on the culture of the school and the staff within it. Perhaps the eradication of bullying will take a major societal change in that we need to learn to *celebrate difference rather than tolerate it*. At times we seem far away from the toleration stage but the journey must begin somewhere and I hope that this book represents a contribution to that journey.

For those who want to inquire about specific ideas mentioned in the book or want to undertake work in their school or classroom I have included my contact numbers, other useful sources for help including a booklist. May your journey be fruitful.

Chris Lee

Useful contact points

Name	Contact numbers
<i>Chris Lee</i>	<i>tel 01395-255465 or <u>c.lee-2@plymouth.ac.uk</u></i>
<i>Anti-Bullying Campaign</i>	<i>tel: 020-7378-1446</i>
<i>Advisory Centre for Education</i>	<i>tel: 020-7354-8321</i>
<i>The Children’s Legal Centre</i>	<i>tel: 01206-873-820 <u>www.2essex.ac.uk/clc/</u></i>
<i>Kidscape</i>	<i>tel: 020-7730-3300 <u>www.kidscape.org.uk</u></i>
<i>Parentline plus</i>	<i>tel: 0808-800-2222 <u>www.parentlineplus.org.uk</u></i>
<i>BBC</i>	<i><u>www.bbc.co.uk/education/archive/bully/help/shtml</u></i>
<i>DfEE: Anti-bullying website</i>	<i><u>www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying</u></i>

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Bullying Questionnaire:

A) ABOUT YOU -*(No names are required but we would like some information)*

I am *(please circle)* Female Male

Class

B) WHAT IS BULLYING?

Please write down what you think bullying is.

Bullying is

.....
.....

C) BEING BULLIED

Have you ever been bullied in this school?

(please circle) Yes No

If you said 'Yes', in what way(s) were you bullied?

.....
.....
.....

Were you bullied in any other school?

(please circle) Yes No

(if you answered 'No' go on to Section D)

If you said 'Yes', in what way(s) were you bullied?

.....
.....
.....

Who did you tell?*(please tick)*

- a) Parent(s)
- b) Brother or sister
- c) No one
- d) Tutor
- e) Head of Year
- f) Friend
- g) Anyone else?

D) BULLYING OTHERS

Have you ever bullied anyone?

(please circle)

Yes

No

(if you answered 'No' go on to section E)

If you answered 'Yes'

i) What did you do?

.....
.....

ii) Why did you do it?

.....
.....

iii) Did you mean to hurt them?

(please circle)

Yes

No

E) WITNESSING BULLYING

Have you ever seen anyone being bullied?

(please circle) Yes

No

(if you answered 'No' go on to Section F)

If you answered 'Yes' what did you do? *(please tick)*

- a) walked by
- b) tried to help
- c) told someone
- d) other

F) DEALING WITH BULLYING

What is your opinion of bullying?

.....
.....

How do you think the school should deal with bullying?

.....
.....

How can we prevent bullying?

.....
.....

Why do you think bullies bully?

.....
.....

Thanks very much for taking the time to complete our questionnaire

Parental perspectives on bullying in a primary school.

Chris Lee, University of Plymouth.

Paper presented to the British Educational Research Association, Lancaster, 1996.

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Douglas Avenue,
Exmouth,
Devon
EX 8 2 AT**

Contemporary interest in bullying in schools has resulted in a considerable quantity of writing on the subject. In the last decade our understanding of the phenomenon has been helped by international research which has focussed upon measuring incidence levels, gaining the perceptions of pupils and seeking to set up and evaluate intervention strategies. There have been books addressing bullying which seek to enhance understanding and practice in schools, as well as fiction and non-fiction for children to help render the subject less secretive and to inform pupils. In addition, there has been a variety of research from the academic community nearly all of which has sought to understand the issue within the confines of schools, i.e. the views of children (Cullingford, 1993) and teachers (Siann et al, 1993). Much less data are available about the thoughts and concerns of parents.

Bullying is a complex subject which can often arouse high emotions and the language used to describe it demonstrates the range of views held. For some writers it is a 'scourge' (Pervin and Turner, 1994), another perceives it to be 'the most malicious and malevolent form of deviant behaviour practiced in our schools' (Tattum, 1989), yet another assigns it the powerful title 'the Silent Nightmare' (Smith, 1991). Alternatively, there are those who, whilst they do not sanction it, nevertheless ask that we should regard it as 'normal' (Maines and Robinson, 1991).

Parents are now considered as 'clients' in our school system and their views seem to be increasingly taken into consideration and, in this respect, bullying is no different from other issues to do with pupil welfare and relationships. Given the emotions that a child being bullied or being involved in incidents in any way can excite, it is essential that schools and parents have a clear comprehension of each other's stance on the subject and the management of incidents that may arise. They do not possess a single cohesive view on bullying nor is it to be expected that there should be one parental perspective, but it will be argued in this paper that they need the opportunity to make their views known and to gain an understanding of the perspectives of other parents as well as staff and children. For many children there has been the awareness raising, through their schools, on bullying and related issues over the last few years and, even without this, they are the 'experts' on the playground and the underworld within schools. Their teachers have been offered a variety of courses, awareness raising and documentation (Tattum and Herbert, 1990; DfE, 1994) and now have a variety of sources to draw upon to increase their understanding. Not as many arenas or sources of understanding exist for parents beyond advice through literature and support groups such as ABC (Anti-Bullying Campaign), except where individual PTAs have addressed the matter and have been involved in developing a whole school policy. However there have been some impassioned

statements from individual parents about the effects, such as inducing guilt and self blame, that bullying can have upon them (Anon., 1994) and the impact of bullying on a child with special educational needs (Roberts, 1994).

In what follows I present the views of some parents who have not been openly involved in policy generation and who possess the breadth of views that may be a consequence of a lack of involvement or, perhaps, just typical of parental perceptions (Hughes, 1994) but who, nonetheless, need to be heard. This is an attempt to gain insights into how some parents perceive bullying in a primary school and the implications of these perceptions for enhancing communication and closer co-operation between schools and parents.

The School

The paper is based upon research from a two year project in a primary school (350 pupils on roll) in a medium sized town with a catchment area which drew upon a variety of socio-economic groups. Although the school did not have a specific, discrete policy on bullying, it did belong to a cluster of schools (12 primary, 1 comprehensive and 1 special school) which had informed all parents, through a leaflet, of their approach to the subject. Pupils and staff had also received a similar leaflet, described as a 'guide', targeted at their level and aiming to meet their needs and there was a single sheet which they labelled a 'policy'. One of the impressions left after interviews with parents, children and staff at the school was that this was not a school that had a major bullying problem or an incidence level that was in any way greater than other schools. Indications from questionnaires and interviews undertaken with pupils suggest that bullying was not seen as an extensive problem and interviews with staff highlighted their concerns for the well being of pupils and their willingness to confront complex and sensitive issues. The impression was that the school was a very caring one.

The research involved interviews with all of the oldest pupils of the school, all the teachers and mealtime assistants and 30 children were represented by their parent(s), half of whom volunteered to be interviewed and the other half agreed to complete questionnaires, following a letter informing them of the project and inviting their participation. They are the group which have informed and helped to illustrate this paper but the other groups, such as the pupils and their teachers, will have an impact on the discourse. Although all parents were invited to partake, most, but not all that did, had a specific 'agenda' in that their children had been bullied and only one parent acknowledged that her son had bullied. Many parents were encouraged to participate even if they had nothing particularly to report in terms of personal experience, and, despite few responses to the invitation, their limited involvement helps us to

gain a fuller picture of the view of parents. Nonetheless parents of victims of bullying are a significant group in that there is evidence that they are more likely to be disappointed with the management of incidence in schools (Pervin, 1995).

Two broad areas were addressed:

- What do parents believe bullying to be? Are there any differences in the ways that parents define bullying?
- What is the understanding of parents whose children have been bullied and how do they feel about it?

Definition

Much of the literature and research undertaken in schools has sought to define bullying at the outset in order that the reader or respondent has a clearer understanding of the meaning ascribed to the term. These definitions have become significant as they serve to provide a focus for the reader and help to distinguish any variations in thinking. Additionally they have highlighted any cultural differences e.g. the use of term ‘mobbing’ to portray group attack on individuals (Pikas, 1989) emerged from the Scandinavian tradition of research that, in many respects has led the field in this area. However there are problems with using definitions of bullying at the outset of any collection of information. First, they limit the respondent to one meaning of the term, which is that of the author or researcher and that may not match the meaning that the individual pupil or parent might ascribe to it. Some of the pupils, who formed another element of the research, saw bullying as that which they had experienced that had hurt them rather than embracing the term through an intellectual attempt to define it. A second complication is that there have been variations in the definitions used by writers and researchers on the subject that will impact upon any measurement of incidence levels when they are used to focus respondents in research. Some emphasise repetition and an apparent lack of provocation (Stephenson and Smith, 1989; Ahmad, Whitney and Smith, 1993; Besag, 1989), others stress intent and the causing of hurt (Tattum and Herbert, 1990; Besag 1989) or seek to discern the difference between bullying and other forms of aggression (Smith and Sharp, 1994). One significant definition emerged from the DfE booklet, that was sent to all schools which incorporated nearly all of the above plus a reference to the inability of the victims to ‘defend themselves’,

‘it is deliberately, hurtful behaviour; it is repeated often over a period of time’(DfE,1994).

It looks to have influenced the deliberations of the cluster group, of which the case study

school was a member, whose guide for parents related that:

‘Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be PHYSICAL, VERBAL or EMOTIONAL, involving physical injury, threats and intimidation, teasing and name-calling. It can be continuous or an isolated incident’.

This definition seems to have embraced most of the elements of other definitions spotlighted below and is certainly a diverse one which challenges the requirement of continuity for there to be bullying. However for some reason this repetition component is omitted from the definition which forms part of the cluster group’s policy statement:

‘The wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten another person. Words or actions that upset or frighten others. Deliberately making others feel uncomfortable.’

What emerges from research literature and school based attempts to explain their understanding of bullying is a picture of differing emphases or notions, although some common strands are discernible when all attempted definitions are examined.

The key components from the definitions of researchers and writers appear to be:

Intent	was there a clear intention of the bully or bullies to hurt others?
Hurt	did the victim of the bullying feel hurt by an act or the relationship that he or she has with a bully or bullies?
Systematic	was the action of the bully neither random nor irregular but methodical, continuous and detached?
Duration	did the bullying take place over a long period of time?
Repetition	was it repeated?
Power or strength	was there an imbalance in power or a feeling of powerlessness in the victim?
Unprovoked	did the victim play any part in gaining the attention of the bullies? This assumes greater significance when considering ‘provocative victims’, a subgroup of victims identified by researchers as pupils who invite the attentions of bullies or may even demand to be bullied (Stephenson and Smith, 1989; Besag, 1989).

All of the above are set in a context which highlights that bullying can be intimidation or attack in a physical, psychological or verbal form.

The views of parents, like those of the academic community, indicated some differences in their understanding of the term bullying. Sometimes they defined it in ways that described the behaviours that had been endured by their child rather than the nature of the relationship, with 'teasing' being a term which might describe name calling or taking something from another pupil whereas 'bullying' was often reserved for physical acts. This is a significant distinction given that the nature of bullying amongst girls is less likely to involve physical violence than between boys, but often incorporates social exclusion or malicious verbal comments (Besag, 1989).

Some parents had views which offered a broader perspective and reflected many of the themes found in the literature. These included:

'the exertion of fear over somebody else'.

'physical or mental abuse'.

'a repetitive action and it has a protagonist with an outcome'.

'continued harassing and victimisation'.

'where one person feels in some way intimidated by another by means of verbal or physical pressure'.

Two parents suggested that for there to be bullying there had to be hurt:

'I think bullying is more to do with how the victim receives the abuse. Whether they are ... hurt emotionally, physically or whatever'.

'..... a repetitive act of hurtfulness that found the weakest point'.

In the first response bullying was defined by how the victim felt about the experience and ceased to be any single act or series of acts of aggression but an emotional reaction. This served as a reminder that one girl pupil from Year 6 commented that she was bullied all the time but it did not hurt her and that it was just part of life in school, which she accepted and dealt with herself. Another parental view proposed that persistency rather than hurt was the key element:

'you can deliberately hurt them but that is not bullying, I think it's got to be persistent'.

Whilst a further view seemed to take an alternative perspective and permitted a single act to

be defined as bullying:

'seeking to gain an emotional or physical superiority over another by a single or continuous act of physical or mental abuse'.

Others looked at the playground as central and a somewhat bleak environment as well as highlighting that bullying was, for them, part of a continuum which at one end might be acceptable playground behaviour:

'in the playground children are inherently bad, I believe, it's a playground game that goes one step too far'.

One parent offered some caution with his definition, declaring concern about the resolution of conflict or premature intervention coming from adults as well as an awareness of the negative power of labelling, with words such as bully, bullying and victim.

'you have got to let the children work it out for themselves before you go rushing in and labelling some child a bully and labelling another child a victim'.

Just as there is some consensus and some dissonance amongst writers and researchers, the above clearly indicates that these parents exhibit an awareness of key notions of hurt and intent yet they also seem to attribute variations in meaning to the term bullying, despite access to the definition created by the cluster group of local schools. Such a variety of views are an opportunity as well as a disadvantage. If parents have little agreement about their understanding and definition of bullying, it may make the task of management by the school difficult and since teachers in the study also seemed to offer a variety of views as to definitions, it is difficult not to conclude that both parties would find discussion of the differences and moving towards agreement fruitful. It could well be that they do not reach a single definition, indeed it may be unnecessary and undesirable, but the process of working towards one would make explicit the judgments and tensions that each group may well feel. Just as advice for pupils has been to make bullying less secretive, parents should also be encouraged to offer their views and understanding. At present all parties exist in a world of presumed shared understanding and this may well be the case in many schools, which has led some researchers to adopt questionnaires which focus on specific behaviours or actions (Arora, 1994) rather than the more commonplace method of offering a definition at the outset.

There were also additional dichotomies in that whilst most of the parents felt that the current interest in bullying was a very positive move and they endorsed the school's willingness to

address the matter, others were concerned that the education community was rightly raising issues but that the subject was receiving too much attention or was in danger of being given more emphasis than required:

'there is definite bullying, and it's right that it should be looked at closely but I would be rather concerned that there would be an awful lot of just what you would term as 'natural life' could be lumped under that same heading and given more importance and more emphasis than perhaps it should' .

Assumptions that we live in a world that is outraged in unison about bullying in schools are occasionally countered by such stances and in many ways this statement mirrored the view of a member of staff who saw the current interest in bullying as yet another example of overload from a system by which the teacher, himself, felt bullied. Another parent's perception of the contemporary concern surrounding bullying was that it was another 'politically correct' matter which would eventually return to the background of social issues!

Experience

Parents who have informed this section are those whose children related that they have felt bullied, which was the majority of the self selecting group. In most of these cases it was the parents who sensed initially that something was wrong with the child and the revelation of bullying often followed upset or unusual behaviour.

How do they find out?

Some parents found out that their children were victims of bullying through being told directly by them or, as stated above, noticing distress or uncharacteristic behaviour in their children. Among the ways that they came to know that something was wrong were:

- * a silence where there was normally a talkative child.
- * an inability to sleep.
- * a reluctance to attend school.
- * nightmares.
- * some physical reflection of an emotional upheaval eg. 'tummy aches'
- * in one case there was aggression shown in the family usually towards a younger sibling where there had been none before.
- * informed by other children (usually siblings).
- * a change in 'personality', such as a normally happy child becoming sullen.
- * when the situation had become sufficiently serious that the victim retaliated and then found himself in trouble with teachers .
- * one girl, who was being teased in an aggressive manner, related 'I don't want to eat pudding

tonight because I'm fat' from which provided the key clue for the mother that something was wrong in her daughter's life.

Byrne has proposed a similar list of symptoms and behaviours from research into secondary school bullying, adding requests for money and unexplained cuts and bruises (Byrne, 1994). As indicated previously, it was nearly always the case that the first to hear were the parents or, at least, this was what they were told. None of the pupils reported to their parents that they might have mentioned it to their teachers at school and the frustration for all parties was exemplified by the upset conveyed by a teacher to a mother that her son had revealed nothing to that teacher about his experiences of being victimised:

'she felt that he had hardly communicated with her at all and I found that very very sad that he had gone through all this, without apparently anybody knowing about it until he had just said something to me'.

Similarly none of the parents involved in the research reported that they had picked up concerns or information by the school and it would appear to confirm research findings that pupils are more likely to tell someone at home rather than inform their teachers (Whitney and Smith, 1993). Nor did any of the parents report that their children had sought to discourage them from contacting the school for fear of it leading to exposure to the bullies, which has been observed as a possible response (Sharp and Smith, 1994). This might suggest that the pupils had faith that reporting the matter would not lead to the problem being 'talked up' or that revenge from those deemed as bullies was not a major apprehension.

The reported experience

As parents listened to the tales of their children a diverse range of experiences unfolded. Amongst the girls was the kind of teasing and name calling that leads to exclusion from the group which whilst tolerated, even trivialised by some children, is taken very seriously by many of those who receive such treatment. Typically, boys were the victims of more physical violence, sometimes with a clear intent indicated and in others the term bullying was used to describe how a child was repeatedly injured in football games with the bigger pupils. The entire spectrum ranged from sexual interference to aggressive tackling in football but, in a few cases, parents were aware that something was amiss and reported it to the school who observed matters and relayed results, but, on occasions, little was found to substantiate the suspicions of those parents. Advice for children to tell teachers abounds in literature produced to support pupils and such advice for pupils featured in the school/cluster group policy but for some pupils it may prove almost impossible to tell anyone. If changes in a child's behaviour,

disposition or attitude are the means by which bullying becomes conspicuous, it is more likely that parents will be the initial inspiration for action and their role in the beginning of intervention is crucial.

How to react?

One of the principal sources of such advice, in this case, came through a leaflet which contained the views of the Headteachers of the schools in the 'cluster'. Each child received a copy and there was a special edition for parents. The basic policy advocated by the leaflet was that any pupil being bullied should:

- * not blame themselves,
- * tell a teacher, a friend or another adult,
- * not retaliate either physically or through name calling,
- * explain to the bully that what they do is hurtful and walk away.

This is an example of the clarity and consistency in thinking amongst the schools yet, despite such lucidity, it was not always easy for pupils to rise to the aspirations of the policy and they were not all in receipt of matching advice from their parents. Clearly some pupils felt unable to tell anyone at the time and were not motivated to do so until they had become desperately unhappy. Others found it hard not to blame themselves especially if the bullying arose from perceived physical deficits such as being overweight. But perhaps the most challenging aspect for the school was the variety of advice given by parents on how their children were to conduct themselves and how this often contradicted the wisdom of the policy/guide. For some parents counter aggression provided the answer:

'we have told her ... if somebody attacks you they must expect you to defend yourself, so do it ... if you are defending yourself you are allowed to defend yourself, every school says that - you don't have to just lie down and get kicked, you must be prepared to defend yourself because at that point nobody is'.

A milder version which also recognised the difficulty in standing up to bullies was suggested by one parent:

I think they shouldn't stand outside I think they should speak up and say 'oi' to the person but I don't think children do'.

Whilst another felt that departing the scene with no reference to 'telling' was the considered approach:

'just stay out of the way, walk away from it, it's not worth it'.

A further view fully complimented the policy despite counter advice from a friend, for whom the last resort of 'hitting back' (Lawson, 1994) was the recommended action.

'I have told him to tell his teacher, not to do anything, walk away and she (the friend) said I brought my kids up with the fact if they were thumped they thump back'.

Disparate views such as those above highlight the complexity of the task facing schools which seek to advocate that bullies should not be dealt with by counter aggression. Indeed, given the limitations on schools regarding corporal punishment they are almost compelled to adopt approaches which seek to avoid 'fuelling the fire'. Whether schools seek to punish bullying through behaviour policy or adopt non-punitive stances, they need to involve parents not only in the development of that stance and the rationale behind it but also to develop policy and practice on how victims can be supported or advised at home.

Conclusions

The research into effective approaches to understanding and countering bullying demands a recognition of the perspectives of parents, the significance of the parent-teacher partnership and the specific needs of those parents whose children may have been involved in bullying (Train, 1995). Our understanding of bullying, derived from research which incorporated preconceived definitions of bullying, may now need to be questioned or examined, for, just as children offer diverse notions of their interpretation of the term, their parents appear to have similarly wide ranging understanding. It may well be that the meaning attributed by parents to the term 'bullying' has been constructed by the experience of their children. Certainly there are those in the research community who are beginning to question devising all embracing definitions of bullying which will have meaning for all age groups (Madsen, 1996) and who are perceiving the differing interactions highlighted by definitions (Boyle, 1996).

Tattum has referred to parents as one of the three central 'spheres of involvement' in bullying incidents in schools (Tattum D., 1993) alongside teachers and pupils, yet the literature on bullying does not reflect this significance. Gaining their perceptions may add a layer to the complex problem in the management of bullying incidents for schools but the benefits of a policy of full involvement will serve to help eliminate the secrecy often associated with the

phenomenon. Projects which have enhanced the role that parents play in setting up and carrying out policy have helped to breakdown the tensions that can appear between school and home as well as impacting positively on preventive techniques (Pepler D., Craig, W., Zeigler S. and Charach A., 1993). Yet, as demonstrated in this research, the role that parents often find themselves playing is the more reactive one of identifying and observing a problem at home and offering advice which may fail to resolve conflict or complement school policy and practice. This case study has, then, illustrated the importance of including parental perspectives in both research into bullying and attempted intervention strategies.

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