The Impact of Using Resilience-based Practice on Outcomes for Pupils with Complex Needs

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Contents

Abstract

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Key Words: resilience, complex needs, whole school, Academic Resilience

This research uses a whole school approach to promoting resilience in children with complex needs. Resilient Therapy and its Resilience Framework were implemented to guide staff practice. This framework is based on evidence-based strategies and is underpinned by four key principles that inform practice.

The importance of this work is twofold. Firstly, long term outcomes for children with complex needs, particularly those living in deprivation, are typically worse when compared with their peers. Government policies aimed at addressing this issue have had somewhat limited impact over the past 17 years. Research that addresses the needs of these children is crucial. Secondly, schools hold a central position to support resilience in pupils; however, whole school approaches involving all staff are scarce. Part of this whole school approach's originality lies in involving all staff - cooks, teachers, site supervisors and senior leaders alike. Historically, children with complex needs have been overlooked in schools-based resilience research.

This thesis makes a contribution to addressing these shortcomings through the collaborative, participatory approach employed. A critical realist theoretical framework supported the action research method used. Mixed methods were used to explore mechanisms that facilitate, or act as barriers to, supporting resilience in pupils with complex needs. Quantitative measures included pupils' school attendance data, academic attainment and social and emotional progress. Participatory qualitative methodologies were used with staff (collaborative inquiry n=16), and pupils (art-based body mapping n=12). A survey ascertaining staff confidence in using and applying resilience-based practice was also conducted (n=28). On the quantitative measure of social and emotional improvements made by pupils, a statistically significant finding was evidenced. School attendance and academic performance also showed improvement, although not statistically significant. Thematic analysis of staff and pupils' experiences showed common themes. These indicated a practice shift from the predominant use of a behaviourist paradigm to that of an ecological model to support pupil outcomes. What is termed 'resilient moves' made by staff at varying levels of pupils' ecologies contributed to these.

Implications for future practice highlight the importance of viewing a child holistically. The necessary elements for government sector agencies using the Resilience Framework in practice are shared, specifically, how policymakers view what 'achievement' may look like for children with complex needs is raised. Recommendations for resilience researchers include undertaking a distributive justice approach that tackles the current climate of inequalities and involving those who experience these inequalities to challenge these issues is endorsed.

Tables and Figures

Definitions and Terms

Definitions

Behaviourist Model

John B Watson (1913, p1), a founder of methodological behaviourism defines this approach to psychology as "…a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behaviour". This work illustrates use of strategies by staff to manage and control children's behaviour, as identified by both staff and pupils, prior to implementation of the Resilience Framework.

Complex Needs

For the purposes of this research, complex needs is considered to be when children have additional needs, as identified by their families and outside professionals with knowledge of 'typical' child development. This may include professionals such as a Psychologist diagnosing a child with a psychological disorder, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a multi-disciplinary team assessing a child as having additional educational needs in their school settings, known as Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or a counsellor addressing mental health needs, such as depression - or "constellated disadvantages" as Hart, Blincow and Thomas (2007) refer to them. A child may experience a combination of differing additional needs. One factor common to all of the children in this research is the context within which they live; severe deprivation. They have also all been identified as having SEN for Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH). In addition to their context and their SEN, children in this research may have none, some, or all of a cluster of additional needs, such as learning difficulties, problems with receptive or expressive communication, having English as their second language, or they may have diagnosed psychological disorders.

Ecological Model

A model that recognises the proximal and distal impacts of factors within an individual's context at varying layers (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The view that individuals are multi person systems that interact with their environment (see Figure 3.1, Chapter Three).

Mechanisms

For the purposes of this research, mechanisms are defined as "…ways in which structured entities by means of their powers and liabilities act and cause particular events…According to conditions, the same mechanism may sometimes produce different events, and conversely, the same type of event may have different causes" (Easton, 2010, p. 122).

Pupils

Refers to 12 children with complex needs attending Eleanor Smith Special School in East London, with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties.

Resilient Therapy

Resilient Therapy and its Framework is a strategic methodology that uses a number of different therapeutic interventions in one coherent package. The Resilience Framework is part of Resilient Therapy. It endorses practitioners, public, private and voluntary sector workers and families to understand how resilient mechanisms work in complex situations

and to build individual, family, organisational and community resilience. For more details see Hart, Blincow and Thomas (2007) and www.boingboing.org.uk.

Staff
Refers to a combination of administrative staff, teachers, support workers, senior leaders and ancillary staff, such as the site supervisor, the cooks and cleaners.

Terms

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

AR – Action Research

ARA – Academic Resilience Approach

BB – Bounce Back

BESD – Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*

BM – Body Mapping

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CD – Conduct Disorder

CI – Collaborative Inquiry

Collaborators – the staff involved in the Collaborative Inquiry group (see Chapter Six)

CR – Critical Realism

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government

dcsf – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE – Department for Education

DISCAP – Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Adolescents and Parents

DoH – Department of Health

DSL – Designated Lead for Mental Health in schools

Early Years – children in education under 5 years old – Nursery and Reception

EBP – Evidence Based Practice

EHC Plans – Education, Health and Care Plans (replaced Statements of Special Educational Need, post 2014)

ESBD – Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties*

ESS – Eleanor Smith School

FREGC – Faculty of Research Ethics and Governing Committee

FSM – Free School Meals, children are entitled to a free school meal if their household income is low. This is indicated in the school census.

FTE – Fixed Term Exclusion

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HABP – Holistic Arts Based Practice

IDACI – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index

KS1 - Key Stage 1, years one and two, ages 5 - 7

KS 2 – Key Stage 2, years three to six, ages 7 - 11

KS 3 - Key Stage 3, years seven to nine, ages 11 - 14

KS 4 – Key Stage 4, years ten and eleven, ages 14 – 16

LAC – Looked After Child, in the care of the State, not family

LBN – London Borough of Newham

LBGT – Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender

LTPs – Local Transformation Plans

MAT - Multi Academy Trust – a collective of schools run by a Trust Board, under a Chief Executive Officer, funded by the Department for Education

MHTF – Mental Health Task Force

MRC – Medical Research Council

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

NFER – National Federation for Education Research

NHS – National Health Service in the United Kingdom

NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education
PHD – Positive Human Development
PHE – Public Health England
PISA – Programme of International Student Assessment
PRU – Pupil Referral Unit
Pupil Premium – monies allocated to schools by Governments in the United Kingdom to support the additional needs of pupils from low-income households
RDAP – Resilience Development Action Plan
RF – Resilience Framework
SATs – Standardised Achievement Tests
SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties*
SEN – Special Educational Needs
SenCo – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SETF – Social Exclusion Task Force
SIMs – Statistical Information Management – records schools' administrative data
SIP - School Improvement Plan
Social Mobility Index – compares the chances that children from disadvantaged backgrounds will do as well in school and as young adults in 324 authority district areas in England
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
Statemented – Categorisation of a child by the local authority (pre-2014) in which they reside that they have Special Educational Needs, wherein a statement of how to support their needs is agreed between school, agencies and family
Sub Levels – the national measurement of academic achievement at the time of this research being completed
SW – Support Worker – equivalent roles and responsibilities as teaching assistants in mainstream schools, but with a specialism in social, emotional and behavioural needs of children
TA – Thematic Analysis
Third Sector – voluntary or community organisations - neither public nor private sector e.g. charities, self-help groups, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutual. Independent of the Government, not for personal profit
UK – United Kingdom
UKRP – United Kingdom Resilience Programme
UNICEF – United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund
WHO – World Health Organisation
YOT – Youth Offending Team

Note * BESD, ESBD and SEMH are used interchangeably, depending on time of writing, to describe the same cluster of Special Educational Needs.

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Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa
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Ko Taranaki toku Maunga
Ko Oao Iti toku Awa
Ko Cheryl raua ko Graeme oku Tipuna
Ko Stephanie toku ingoa
No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa

Greetings to you all
The vessel my ancestors came to New Zealand on was "Maori"
My mountain is Taranaki
My river is Oao Iti
Cheryl and Graeme are my parents
My name is Stephanie
Again, greetings to you all

I come from New Zealand, Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud). This is my mihi in the Maori language, introducing first of all where I come from (my turangawaewae, the place I stand). Where and whom I come from is considered to be more important than my name. Upon reading my research, I hope to show you the link between how important it is to people to have a place to belong, or having a sense of belonging; their own place to stand...
Without the support and continual commitment of Graham Smith, the Head Teacher at Eleanor Smith School, along with my mentor of 17 years, Kevin Higgins, I could not have achieved this. You have both always believed in me without fail and encouraged and inspired me to believe in what I was trying to do. Best of all, you did it with me. The staff and pupils at the school have played a vital role in co-researching with me, and it has been a pleasure to present real life research that makes a difference to children's lives. The senior leadership team, of which I have loved being a member, have also steadfastly supported and encouraged me, believing in, and helping me to embed this work for the past five years. The London Borough of Newham have also supported this research since its inception and I am grateful for this and am heartened by the continuing work Newham are engaging in, using the Resilience Framework to make a difference now to so many children in many of our schools.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the research contained within this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed
Dated

Part 1

Beating the Odds of Complexity

Chapter One: Introduction

I have held a personal and professional interest in 'being resilient' for over 20 years. In my professional capacities, regardless of role, I have always worked with underprivileged children and their families. During this time, my interest was sparked as to why it was that some of these children appeared to succeed and go on to achieve the same in adulthood as their non-deprived counterparts, while others did not. Over these 20 years, I have worked with children who have experienced multiple and varied contexts; being exposed to abuse and neglect and/or domestic violence, managing learning difficulties, exclusion by peers, and being rejected by their local communities, along with multi-agency professionals working 'at' them, due to what was viewed as their 'anti-social' behaviour. This led me to consider why and how some children exposed to similar developmental risks went on to gain academic qualifications and find employment while others struggled to do so.

Seventeen years ago, I emigrated from New Zealand to the United Kingdom (UK) and began working at Eleanor Smith School (ESS) in East London. Eleanor Smith is a special school for children with similar contexts to those I had worked with previously in New Zealand. The school is identified in this work because, as will become clear, the collaborative research completed has contributed to a whole school approach being used nationally, which is accessible on the internet. Videos that pupils and staff have contributed to are readily, and publicly available. Consequently, the head teacher and governors of the school have given permission for the school to be identified. Throughout this research, pseudonyms have been used for pupils. Where possible, for example in the qualitative data from the collaborative inquiry sessions, staff are identified by their role in the school alone. With reference to my role in this research, it should also be noted that while the approach was collaborative with staff as co-researchers and pupils as active contributors answering the research questions, the academic work is that of my own as researcher of the thesis.

I have held a senior position at the school as assistant head teacher, for the past ten years. Having come from New Zealand and seeing the same issues translated equally in the UK, the question of what else could be done kept nagging at me. Equally, dissatisfaction with the working models that were being used with these children and their families created a professional unease in me. The school's practice was heavily influenced by a behaviourist model (see Definitions and Terms), which appeared to work for some pupils to improve their behaviour but did not address their development holistically. Since working in New Zealand, the concept of resilience (Rutter, 1999; Masten, 2007) never left my consciousness and a feeling of 'time to act' overtook me when I became aware of the typical prognoses many of these children faced.

Conceptualising how to summarise the varied, yet at times common, differences between some of the children I had worked with, both in New Zealand and the UK, was difficult to do. Their lived experiences are individual to them, yet they may share some commonalities that impact upon them, like levels of economic deprivation. In the UK context, the children at Eleanor Smith School could usefully be thought of as having complex needs. The clusters of need are presented in the subsequent section of this Chapter, with vignettes used to illustrate the complexity; factors they may experience collectively, but differentially.

Once the concept of complex needs was defined for my research, I began literature searches to explore what had been done in the field to date. Of interest to me was whether resilience research could be used to support children with complex needs to achieve better long term outcomes. The ethos of the school was one of a shared learning community, and with collegial support, I began to explore what we, as a staff, could be doing differently or better, with a determination to achieve more positive outcomes for pupils. It was clear from the research that children with complex needs were being excluded (not always intentionally) from contributing to knowledge that could potentially hold a lot of promise for them and their futures.

The research that pervaded at the time was disappointing. Reasons for this are detailed in Chapter Three. Very little had been done in the field of resilience in schools that included children with complex needs, or that utilised a whole school approach. The reasons for this are varied and also discussed in full in Chapter Three. The work of Professor Angie Hart and colleagues at the University of Brighton interested me. They were tackling the challenges of working with children and families with multiple needs, living in contexts of disadvantage. I was also drawn to the work of Hart and colleagues due to the "inequalities imagination" (Hart, Blincow & Thomas, 2007) stance they took and their felt need to challenge systems and work differently. It appeared difficult to work collaboratively and ecologically, with partner agencies at times. With some exceptions (discussed in Chapter Two), outcomes for children with complex needs weren't improving. This led me to consider what else could be done as practitioners to improve the status quo for them.

Colleagues in Brighton had developed an approach known as Resilient Therapy which includes a framework for professionals (BoingBoing, 2014) and parents/carers (e.g. Hill, 2015; Hill and Hart, 2017) that can be used to support children's needs. This is known as the Resilience Framework ((RF), see Appendix One) and its development was based on the resilience research evidence base, along with experiential and practitioner knowledge (Hart et al., 2007). What attracted me to this approach was that it was accessible for staff, parents and partners, such that we could all contribute as advocates and practitioners in supporting pupils. I also anticipated that the framework's embedded therapeutic approach could address some of the needs of children that other services were failing to do at the time. At the instigation of this research, the framework had not been used systematically in either mainstream or special school contexts. A knowledge gap existed; the proposal being to implement the RF in the school, with an emphasis on involving *all* staff regardless of role. I wanted to review with them and with pupils what might facilitate better outcomes for them and what may be acting as barriers to this.

This thesis questions how effectively the resilience literature can be used to create positive change in children for whom the odds are typically stacked against. These odds are shown in inequalities research with startling regularity. The link between poverty and poorer life outcomes is abundantly clear (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, (UNICEF), 2016; Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016). The work of Wilkinson and Pickett (2010; 2018) supports Layard and Dunn's (2009) assertions that the more economic deprivation someone experiences, the less likely they are to achieve overall well-being, when compared to their counterparts who have not faced the same potential difficulties. Children may experience mental health difficulties which are a factor contributing to their complex needs. In 2015, the Department of Health (DoH) reported that

children who have mental health difficulties, Conduct Disorder (CD) in particular, are twice as likely as their peers to leave school with no qualifications. Children with diagnosed CD are also particularly vulnerable to future delinquency and criminality (DoH & DfE, 2017). A disproportionate number of pupils in the school this research is set within are diagnosed with CD, compared to the national average (DoH, 2015). Along with living in contexts of poverty and possibly experiencing mental health difficulties, children with complex needs may also have special educational needs. The Department for Education ((DfE) 2011, 2014, 2017) and the Office for Standards on Education (2010) have repeatedly evaluated children with special educational needs' life prospects, and shown year upon year that they are worse than for children who do not live in contexts of deprivation with complex needs.

Government policies in the UK in the past 17 years have targeted how to stem the influence of unequal odds; sometimes having an impact, but generally not to a great extent. The discourse promoted by these policies is one of multi-agency, collaborative partnership work (e.g. dcsf, 2007a; DfE, 2011; Davis, 2016). Despite the intentions of these policies being to improve outcomes for children with complex needs, little has changed for them (DoH, 2015; UNICEF, 2016). For varied reasons partnership work appears to be difficult at times between the state and voluntary sectors. Chapter Two elaborates on these points.

After reading about the minimal impact these policies have had for children with complex needs, I was inspired to try a different approach to working using the RF but more importantly, involving *all* staff. This determination was guided by my reading on the importance of a child having one significant adult in their life (Daniel and Wassell, 2002; Hart & Heaver, 2013). The site supervisor may have a closer relationship to a pupil than a class teacher, for example, so it is as important that the person in that role is knowledgeable and confident at supporting resilience development as it is for those in roles typically viewed as school 'staff' - teachers and teaching assistants. One of the original contributions made by this thesis was the analysis of the impact on resilience development in children, using a truly whole school approach, something that up until 2012 did not exist in the literature. Whole school approaches were still being demanded by the DoH in 2015, the Mental Health Taskforce in 2016 and Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts and Peereboom (2016) in their report for the Welsh Public Policy Institute. Consequently, the Resilience Framework was adopted and implemented in the school by staff, involving pupils, parents and wider community agencies.

It should be noted that some schools in the UK have implemented resilience supporting programmes as part of their curriculum offer (Hart & Heaver, 2015). There are criticisms of these programmes, from a resilience research perspective, including; most are 'bolt on' lessons, some do not address resilience development itself, but rather issues such as anxiety and depression in children and young people, and others do not use an ecological model (see Definitions and Terms) that recognises a young person's entire context. Three years after the research was instigated, the DoH's child mental health and well-being review (2015, p.36) stated "We encourage all schools…to continue to develop whole school approaches to promoting mental health and wellbeing…[because] Evidence shows that interventions taking a whole school approach…have a positive impact in relation to both physical health and mental wellbeing outcomes".

It was particularly important to me that we developed a collective, sustainable, ecological approach to working with our pupils. At the outset of the research, this had not been

trialled, either in a special school or in mainstream school settings. Three years into the research's journey, the school's contribution has informed the Academic Resilience Approach (ARA). This approach was developed by Professor Angie Hart and Lisa Williams, and is being used nationally now (BoingBoing, 2014). The learning from this research has translated directly into practice implications such as the development of ARA, and I review this journey in Chapters Nine and Ten.

Delineating the mechanisms behind what acted as facilitators or barriers to developing resilience in children with complex needs was essential. A critical realist theoretical framework supported the action research methodology implemented (see Chapter Four). Researchers using critical realist theory, resilience research and action research are all interested in the mechanisms that interplay to generate outcomes in programmes. These approaches also demand that participatory approaches be used with those at the heart of the investigations (Walmsley, 2004; Nind, 2008). Participatory methods were essential to the ethos of this research, given the failure of resilience research in schools to involve children with complex needs in the past (Hart & Heaver, 2013). Such methods may also shine a light on new research findings for future investigation. The complementary nature of critical realism and action research was a logical fit. Co-production of knowledge with children with complex needs was scarce in the field, and while the challenges of doing so may be off putting to some researchers, it appeared to me to be the moral and ethical course for my research to take, as described in Chapter Four. It is essential to access the voices of those involved in research so that findings inform practice based on lived experiences. Before an outline of the structure of this work is provided, it is necessary for the reader to understand the context in which the research sits.

Closing the Gap
The Context of Complex Needs – the Setting
Defining 'complex needs' is difficult to do, especially for the purposes of research. A useful way to conceptualise complex needs is suggested by Aumann and Hart (2009). In their book on parenting and working with children with complex needs, they propose viewing them as "…frequently living in or on the margins of poverty, [being] vulnerable to the influences of prejudice and discrimination…on the receiving end of others' negative attitudes, report[ing] disproportionate levels of bullying and…managing the on-going daily demands of their particular impairment" (Aumann & Hart, 2009 p.17). Note they use the words "are frequently", not always, and "their particular impairment". Children with complex needs may experience difficulties in common, but their issues and experiences are not uniform. They tend to individually experience clusters of a wider group of difficulties, sometimes referred to as "constellated disadvantage" (Hart et al., 2007 p.5).

Aumann and Hart's (2009) discussion of the concept is also not a definition *per se*, but rather highlights potential experiences of children resulting from varying additional needs they may have that require support. For the purposes of this research, complex needs is considered to be when children have additional needs, as identified by their families and outside professionals with knowledge of 'typical' child development. This may include professionals such as a psychologist diagnosing a child with a psychological disorder, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a multi-disciplinary team assessing a child as having additional educational needs in their school settings, known as Special Educational

Needs (SEN), and/or a counsellor addressing mental health needs, such as depression; constellated disadvantages (Hart et al., 2007) all for the same child.

One factor common to all of the children in this research is the context within which they live. They all live within a deprived ecology; among the worst levels reported nationally in the UK (Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2015). They have also all been identified as having SEN for Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH). (Prior to 2014 SEMH was referred to as Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) in the UK. Consequently, depending on the date of the literature being referred to, these terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. See Definitions and Terms). In addition to their context and their SEN, children in this research may have none, some or all of a cluster of additional needs, such as learning difficulties, problems with receptive or expressive communication, English may be their second language, or they may have diagnosed psychological disorders. This may be most easily conceptualised as a 'need matrix' (see Table 1:1). At Eleanor Smith School 34% of pupils have been diagnosed with ADHD (compared with 1.5% nationally (DoH, 2015)), and 15.7% with CD (compared with 5.8% nationally (DoH, 2015)).

Pupil	Context of deprivation	SEMH difficulty identified as SEN	Mental health difficulty(ies) (indicated by CAMHS/ school counsellor involvement)	Learning difficulty (mild to moderate only)	Communication difficulties (mild to moderate)	Familial Issues (indicated by Social Care involvement)	English as an Additional Language
A	✓	✓	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Conduct Disorder	mild	none	✓	-
B	✓	✓	-	mild	moderate	-	✓
C	✓	✓	Anxiety	mild	mild	-	-
D	✓	✓	Attachment Difficulties	moderate	none	-	✓

Table 1:1: Matrix of Complex Needs

Preferably, the definition of a construct should have parameters that are distinguished enough in research to enable the most accurate measurement of the impact of interventions possible. The impact of the kinds of difficulties children with complex needs may experience is not easily conducive to measurement. This is a difficulty resilience research has struggled to grapple with as illustrated further in Chapter Three. In order to delineate the impact of individual challenges, research would need to test each factor as an independent variable, a positivist view of measuring human experience. Such an approach does not take account of the impact such factors may have on the lived experience of children and their families. When considering children with complex needs, the issues they

experience are not uniform to them as a group, such that it is not akin to researching the impact of one diagnosed psychological difficulty on children. For the purposes of this research, it is more useful to consider how clusters of needs (see Table 1:1) may work in combination in children's lives; the aim being to investigate a group of children, each with different lived experiences, some of which may be shared, in a context of deprivation. It is also important to consider how research may contribute knowledge that can have positive future impacts on the typically poor predicted outcomes that exist for them (DfE, 2014; UNICEF, 2016).

Simone and Alistair

It may be useful to consider two children with complex needs, each sharing the commonalities of SEN within a context of deprivation, but with differing additional needs, Simone and Alistair (both pseudonyms, as are all the names given to research participants in this thesis). Simone is a 14 year old girl, whose mother has misused drugs and alcohol for many years and has a mental illness which renders her incapable of caring for her children on a daily basis. Simone has been exposed to domestic violence, and has begun to self-harm. She has two brothers, both of whom are involved with rival gangs in the local area. She has a close relationship with one of them, who supports her with her daily care needs. Simone is on medication to help her manage the symptoms of ADHD, which contributed to her behaviour, impacting on her learning progress. She has a label of SEN for SEMH difficulties. She is bright, has a well-developed sense of humour, and shares positive relationships with her peers and adults alike. She is a talented cook.

Alistair is a 10 year old boy who, up until the age of nine lived in Pakistan. When he was two years old, his biological mother moved to the UK, and Alistair remained in his home country. His mother left him in the care of his biological sister. Alistair grew up considering his sister to be his mother. At the age of nine, his mother called for him to come into her care in the UK. He entered the country thinking his mother was his grandmother and was never to see his sister (maternal figure he attached to for seven years) again. He had to learn how to speak English (his UK based family did not) and how to fit into the British education system. He does not have many dependable friendships and struggles in his mainstream school. He is a quick learner, eager to apply his learning in school, but his language barriers impact on his learning progress. His difficulties have led him to being assessed as having SEN for SEMH difficulties. He has strong relationships with school staff, especially his teacher, and is considered to be a very honest and forthright child.

These young people both have 'complex needs'. They share some factors in common, such as family instability and not having achieved age expected learning goals at school (see Chapters Seven & Nine). They both live in a UK borough which, at the time the research was conducted, was the second most deprived in England (London Borough of Newham (LBN), 2014; DCLG, 2015). The label 'complex needs' does not adequately describe the commonalities and differences between individual experiences and what they mean to them. Complex needs is a term used to describe a cluster of additional needs, as demonstrated in Table 1:1; all of which, it should be noted, may not necessarily have a negative impact upon children, who, at times, beat the odds.

Adding to this complexity, adversity can have positive effects on children; a concept called "steeling effects" (Rutter, 1999). Rutter (1999 p.125) defines steeling effects as when "…the experience of overcoming adversity may serve to strengthen people's resistance to later environmental hazards". Chapter Three discusses this and other theories that may help us to understand the application of resilience research to children with complex needs in schools. Simone's experiences with her mother being unable to provide adequate daily care for her may have shaped her into being the independent young person she is today. Alistair's lack of attachment to his mother and the loss of his sister may have contributed to the strong relationship he has with his teacher now, seeing her as a significant adult in his life.

Defining complex needs for the purposes of this research may be most easily done by illustrating the context. Simone and Alistair attend a special school set within the second and fourth most deprived areas (according to post code) within the same borough in the UK (DCLG, 2015). The homelessness rate of one in twenty five residents is the highest in the UK (see BBC, 8th November 2017). There is extensive cultural and linguistic diversity with around 200 dialects spoken (LBN, 2014). They were referred to the special school because they had been excluded by their mainstream schools who found it difficult to manage and support their additional needs within their own settings. The context itself is complex - their individual needs are complex. The way forward, it would seem, is to acknowledge this context and the needs within it; to confront the difficulty of defining the concept neatly and make this as explicit to fellow researchers as possible. The above outline attempts to make this limitation transparent from the outset.

Typical clusters of needs that this research focuses on are illustrated in Simone and Alistair's vignettes. These are all interrelated and appear to influence each other in multi-directional ways. This reflects a fourth wave resilience research view of understanding lived experiences, outlined in Chapter Three. These factors usually mean children experiencing such difficulties may require additional support. All of them - whether individual, biological, social, developmental or systemic - interplay to create children's lived experiences. The intertwined experience of such issues often leads to the typically poor prognoses children with complex needs face. This interplay is demonstrated in Chapter Two, beginning with the impact of deprivation on some children. An ecological view is one way of attempting to make sense of the multi-directional impacts these factors may have on children, both internal and external to them (see Chapter Three).

The content covered in each of the Chapters in this thesis is as follows; this Chapter, along with Chapters Two "The Context of Complexity", and Three, "How can Resilience Research in Schools Support Children with Complex Needs?" comprise Part One: "Beating the Odds of Complexity". Chapter Four, "Voices, Participation and Collaboration, Chapter Five, "Framing Lived Experiences", and Chapter Six, "Accessing Perceptions and Lived Experiences", make up Part Two of the thesis: "Accessing Lived Experience". Chapters Seven, "The Quantitative Data" and Eight, "The Qualitative Data: Themes from Shared Experiences" couple to make Part Three, "The Findings: Evidence of Change". Finally, Part Four "Closing the Gap – Lessons for the Future" contains Chapter Nine, "Discussion of Findings: Understanding Outcomes", and Chapter Ten, "Practice Changes Informing Educational Policy".

Structure of this Thesis

Chapter Two: The Context of Complexity

Chapter Two outlines the context within which this research is set– a special school for children with complex needs, located in a borough in East London that has high levels of poverty and a significantly culturally, linguistically and historically diverse population (see Chapter Six for the range of participating pupil's ethnic backgrounds). The impact of their contexts and the subsequent difficulties they may face as a result are examined in detail. Following this, the policies put in place over the past 17 years and their impact on outcomes for children with complex needs are evaluated. I decided to begin the review of literature in the field at this point in time because in 1999 the UK government declared that it was time to address the impact of inequalities on children, and to take subsequent political action to this end (Bryson & Crossley, 2015). As mentioned, some progress has been made for children with complex needs in the past decade, however, overall, longer term outcomes remain poor for them (DoH, 2015). The consistently presented inter-agency partnership work discourse that has been promoted by these policies has not been hugely successful and myself and others are calling for a new approach to be trialled - this is outlined further in this Chapter.

Chapter Three: How Can Resilience Research in Schools Support Children with Complex Needs?

Chapter Three explores resilience promoting research as an alternative to support educational policies in achieving better outcomes for pupils with complex needs. This involves seeking evidence-based strategies that are known to be effective with children with complex needs, whilst still working alongside children and their families in a holistic, ecological manner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), including through inter-agency, partnership work. Chapter Three then goes on to explore the history and development of the concept of resilience, along with definitions of resilience (Hart, Gagnon, Eryigit-Madzwamuse, Cameron, Aranda & Heaver, 2016), and how it may apply to children with complex needs. Current methodological and political criticisms of resilience research are elucidated, and the issues needing to be addressed as a result of these criticisms are discussed.

The knowledge gap that exists in current resilience research - implementing whole school approaches with children with complex needs - is demonstrated. Some of the key resilience-promoting programmes that have been used in the UK in the past 17 years are also reviewed, along with why they do not include or meet the needs of children with complex needs. Reasons for this lack of inclusion are presented and solutions explored that may address the issues surrounding this for the children enrolled at Eleanor Smith School. The RF is then outlined, along with the rationale for using this Framework with children with complex needs and limitations are also discussed. The rationale for using it in the school and its limitations are then elaborated on.

Chapter Four: Voices, Participation and Collaboration

Chapter Four outlines the theoretical underpinnings that are the foundation of the methodology and methods used for this research and are further outlined in Chapters Five and Six. Given criticisms of resilience research with children with complex needs in the past, the methodology of action research is explored, with the necessity of a participatory, inclusive approach borne in mind. How the methodology and subsequent knowledge

generated from the research shaped my approach to ontology and epistemology are shared, and an introduction to Roy Bhaskar's (1978) critical realism is presented. Following this, the justification for taking a critical realist approach, as opposed to other epistemological frameworks, is explored. The tenets of critical realism that inform action research are explained in the context of supporting an understanding of the ecological, resilience-building approach to this work. I am firmly situated within the action research as an insider, as outlined in Chapter One. Finally, considerations of the benefits and challenges to research when this is the case are shared.

Chapter Five: Framing Lived Experiences

This Chapter outlines the importance of choosing methods that are accessible and inclusive for children with complex needs. It also discusses how I felt it was important to use a participatory approach (action research) to work alongside colleagues and pupils, given past criticisms of resilience research (see Chapters Three and Four). I discuss the strengths and potential complementarity of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and the importance of triangulation when using mixed methods. How a critical realist epistemology supports the use of mixed methods is then discussed, along with the principles of this approach, which allow for the uncovering of mechanisms.

Mixed methods within this research consisted of:

- school attendance by pupils, both pre and post RF implementation

- teacher ratings of pupil's social and emotional progress on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) ((Goodman, 1997 in Hall, 2010), see Appendix Two), pre and post RF implementation

- recording of school attendance in July 2013 and March 2014

- monitoring of pupils' academic achievement in July 2013 and again in July 2014

- a pre-RF implementation audit (completed by staff in 2012)

- a post RF implementation survey (re-completed by staff in 2014, see Appendix Three)

- a Collaborative Inquiry group of staff, and

- an arts-based approach (Body Mapping sessions) with pupils.

As mentioned, some of the methods have a collaborative, participatory underpinning, and gaining understanding of the experiences and views shared was facilitated via my use of an action research approach. The importance of being reflexive, especially as an insider researcher, and the possible impact on the findings of my being situated so closely to the research are made transparent as a limitation.

Chapter Six: Accessing Perceptions and Lived Experiences

In Chapter Six, I outline how each of the methods was used in this work. Each instrument is presented in individually, along with details about the participants, timeframes and their place in the school community. A co-analyst was enlisted from the Collaborative Inquiry group to check interpretations made of the themes generated by staff and pupils. The data analysis methodologies used by myself and the co-analyst are overviewed, along with how we re-checked the meanings we had interpreted from themes with our co-researchers. The participatory ethos of the qualitative methods is highlighted, framed within an action research methodology.

Chapter Seven: The Quantitative Data – Measurable Outcomes

Chapter Seven presents the quantitative data, beginning with the statistically significant improvement in Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scores for pupils over time (as rated by their teachers). Pupils' school attendance data was also measured pre and post Framework implementation, showing a slight improvement, but this was not statistically significant. The quantitative data demonstrates that pupils had made academic progress pre and post RF implementation also, but not all at national age expected levels. Staff reports of confidence before and after implementation of the RF are also detailed and an increase in means is evident.

Chapter Eight: The Qualitative Data – Themes from Shared Experiences

The eighth Chapter presents the qualitative data generated from the research and how this contributed to systemic change within the school. This Chapter presents the data generated by staff in the audit's and survey's open-ended questions, along with the themes identified in the Collaborative Inquiry and Body Mapping sessions, as generated through thematic analysis. Themes and sub-themes generated by both staff and pupils are outlined here, along with how these have driven a paradigm change and model of working in the school. Excitingly, this research has contributed to a whole school resilience development approach that has informed what is now used as a national programme; the Academic Resilience Approach, developed by Professor Angie Hart and Lisa Williams with input from schools and a mental health charity (see BoingBoing, 2014). Subsequent practice changes as a result of this work are shared in the findings and implications Chapters.

Chapter Nine: Discussion of Findings: Understanding the Outcomes

This Chapter presents how the resilience research literature explains the findings of this thesis. It outlines how actions ("resilient moves", Hart et al., 2007) taken by staff enabled them to develop practice that pupils found supportive of their resilience. These resilient moves contributed to pupils and staff identifying mechanisms that were triggered by the ecological practice at the school. The mechanisms (see Definitions and Terms) that contributed to the outcomes reported in Chapters Seven and Eight included; any member of staff having the potential to have a positive impact on any pupil, this impact appearing to have a strong relational element (Masten, 2014), and these relationships contributing to a strong sense of belonging (Hart et al., 2007) in pupils to the school. The qualitative evidence was triangulated by the increased quantitative scores on the SDQ, academic progress and increased school attendance overall. While improvement on SDQ scores was statistically significant, it was not for academic progress or school attendance. The work of researchers such as Hair, Hanson, Wolfe and Pollak (2015) and Layard and Dunn (2009) helps to explain

this in the context of children experiencing complex needs set within a context of deprivation (see Chapter Two).

The facilitative mechanisms that support resilience in children with complex needs in this school context are identified. An action research approach (see Chapter Six; Figure 6.1), supported by a critical realist epistemology assisted staff to look behind the surface meanings (Houston, 2010) of data generated to uncover mechanisms (Marks, 2002) that worked together to facilitate resilience in pupils. Facilitative mechanisms of resilience in children in schools, such as positive relationships and a sense of belonging are explained by Banerjee et al. (2016). The impact of staff using an ecological approach to supporting resilience, addressing pupil's needs at varying layers of their contexts is also outlined. The contributions of fourth wave (see Chapter Three) resilience researchers such as Masten (2007) elucidates why this was successful, as staff and pupils both identified.

Themes generated from staff feedback in the collaborative inquiry sessions are shared (see Chapter Five) with respect to what acts as barriers that prohibit resilience-based practice being implemented fully. School priorities and staff confidence levels were both indicated as barriers, and reasons for this are discussed. Higton, Leonardi, Richards, Choudhury, Sofroniou and Owen (2017) explain that these barriers are not uncommon in school settings and are frequently identified by staff as obstacles to programme implementation. Suggestions for how to address these barriers in practice are explored in Chapter Ten. This Chapter finishes with a transparent presentation of the limitations of this collaborative work.

Chapter Ten: Implications: Practice Changes Informing Educational Policy

Finally, Chapter Ten considers the implications of the findings from this research for practice, policy development and future research challenges. The action research model is still currently being used in the school to support pupils and assist staff to reflect on practice, as a driver of the continued momentum this research initiated. This also indicates that a whole school approach such as this (Hart & Heaver, 2015, see Chapter Three) is sustainable. The necessity for research to ensure that those who typically have little or no voice or visibility are not overlooked and to assist in informing policy is outlined. The Chapter then goes on to address how partnership working could be made more successful in the future (Majumdar, 2006), through educational policies at the systems and policy levels addressing those issues raised in Chapter Three. Consideration is also given to what achievement may 'look like' for children with complex needs, along with how policies may begin to challenge inequalities through a distributive justice lens (see Chapter Three). Research questions have been raised by this thesis, and these are indicated in the final section of Chapter Ten.

This Chapter is followed by appendices which include supplementary information referred to throughout the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review. The Context of Complexity

Introduction

This Chapter outlines the context of the children in this research. An ecological perspective is taken, with attention being paid to their physical, economic, social and experiential circumstances. Their context is one of severe deprivation (the second worst in England, (DCLG, 2015; LBN, 2014)). Along with living in this context of poverty, these children have all been diagnosed as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) for Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH). Because of this they are all enrolled in a special school, Eleanor Smith School (ESS), whose purpose is to support pupils with such needs.

This Chapter demonstrates that these children's overall well-being and projected life trajectories are worse than for their counterparts who do not experience such a context. They are considered to have clusters of additional difficulties that they manage daily, which I define as 'complex needs'. The Chapter also outlines the government policies of the past 17 years that have attempted to redress this imbalance. The dominant discourse in these policies has been one of inter-agency partnership work. While strategies in these policies have achieved some successes for children, they have failed to have a marked, universal impact in the United Kingdom (UNICEF, 2016; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2018). I argue for an evidence-based practice approach (DoH, 2015) for these children and finish the Chapter suggesting that resilience-building approaches may be more effective at achieving better outcomes for them than past attempts have been.

A Shared Context of Deprivation

Child poverty is a growing concern in the United Kingdom (UK), and one that is predicted to worsen (Bryson & Crossley, 2015). The effect of disadvantage on children's overall outcomes is clearly shown in research. Layard and Dunn (2009 p.133) assert "…in terms of later life, poverty in childhood is one of the five most powerful and consistent predictors of subsequent disadvantage". The effects of poverty on children can be varied and far reaching. In a webinar on the effects of poverty on school success, Dr Martha Burns highlighted the impact living in poverty can have on language and brain development, and consequently, on academic achievement at school (Burns, 2016, see www.neuronlearning.com). In their research into the association between child poverty, brain development and academic achievement, Hair et al (2015 p.2) support Dr Burns' contention, stating "Poverty is tied to structural differences in several areas of the brain associated with school readiness skills, with the largest influence observed among children from the poorest households".

The correlation between experiencing economic disadvantage and multiple subsequent difficulties is well documented. Dyson, Gallanaugh, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010) cite strong associations between socio-economic disadvantage and well-being, health and achievement and educational attainment. In their text on the effects of social inequalities, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010; 2018) reinforce this, writing where income inequality is large in countries, as in the UK, this is equated with poorer mental health and poorer academic performance, for example. This can contribute to "…an inter-generational cycle of deprivation" (p.121). Hart, Blincow and Thomas's (2007, p.5) concept of "constellated disadvantage" summarises Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) assertion that there

is a correlation between poverty and poor long term outcomes for children. Factors that can contribute to poor outcomes for some children with complex needs are clear. Poverty, worse physical health, lower school achievement, ethnic minority status, Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender (LGBT) identity, poor mental health and poor social relationships may all feature in this constellation of disadvantage. These clusters of disadvantages may also result in children experiencing discrimination or prejudice. For pupils at Eleanor Smith School, this is sometimes evidenced in their exclusion from mainstream schools and their wider communities, as highlighted in Chapters One and Three. Overall predicted life trajectories for these children are typically worse than for their counterparts who do not have complex needs (DfE, 2017a).

Concurring with Dyson et al. (2010) and Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), Gutman, Brown, Akerman and Obolenskaya (2010) found that 20% of boys between the ages of eight and ten who are from low socio-economic backgrounds, and are low school achievers, experience declining or low levels of wellbeing during primary school. The Department for Children, Schools and Families ((dcsf) 2007a, p.76) continues, "At present, a child from a low income family is three times less likely than average to achieve good results at age 16". The Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) (2007 p.10) write "…children from families experiencing multiple disadvantages are: more likely to be rated by their parents as well below average in English and mathematics; more likely to have been suspended or excluded from school; more likely to have poor social networks; and more likely to have been in trouble with the police than children from families with fewer or no family disadvantages" (SETF, 2007 p.10).

The Task Force (SETF, 2007) goes on to say that deprivation is also associated with an increased risk of behavioural problems for children. The evidence is clear; living in a context of deprivation increases children's chances of having poorer well-being than their counterparts, achieving less at school, and being more likely to have social difficulties. In the UK children experiencing these difficulties may be supported in special schools if their needs are so great that they have been assessed as having special educational needs. Schools, and special schools for children with complex needs in particular, are in a position to curb and address these negative predicted trajectories (DoH, 2015).

Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

For the purpose of this research, the focus for SEN includes only those categorised as having SEMH. As mentioned in Chapter One, this term has replaced Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) to indicate the same types of difficulties experienced by children. They both signpost the same cluster of needs, and while the label has changed, the types of needs indicated by it have not. Wherever possible, data from research specifically delineating outcomes for children with SEMH difficulties is used. At times however, outcomes are not necessarily reported for specific SEN groups and are presented as data for children with SEN, which may include children with physical disabilities for example, regardless of specified category of need.

Correlations exist between SEN and poverty/disadvantage and subsequent poor longer-term outcomes for some children. Gutman et al. (2010 p.pv) have asserted that "For the most part, emotional and behavioural difficulties followed by specific learning difficulties are the most frequent predictors of poor [life] outcomes". Dyson et al. (2010) state that those particularly at risk of poor outcomes in their future include children with SEN who also live

in contexts of deprivation. The interplay of factors for children with complex needs is clearly demonstrated in the DfE's (2011) report on outcomes for children with SEN in multiple areas of their lives. An example of this in 2010 (DfE) was evident whereby 30.9% of pupils with statements for ESBD are entitled to free school meals (FSM), an indicator of low household income. Along with this, half of all Looked After Children (LAC, in State Care) have provision for SEN (Office for Standards on Education (Ofsted), 2010). This statistic is three times higher for children with ESBD (Ofsted, 2010). Absenteeism and exclusions from school are also higher for pupils with ESBD (for physical assaults and persistent disruptive behaviour) (DfE, 2017a; Ofsted, 2010). Overall, it appears that if a child experiences living with SEN in a context of deprivation, they are at risk of numerous poor outcomes.

Research strongly indicates the bi-directional interplay for poor performance at school and poor social and emotional adjustment (Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts & Peereboom, 2016). Typically, outcomes data for children with SEMH difficulties is worse than for their non-SEN counterparts, and in some areas, outcomes are worse for children with SEMH difficulties than for children categorised with other special educational needs, such as those with learning difficulties. An example of this is where school exclusions and attendance for children with SEMH is worse than for children with special educational needs, other than SEMH (DfE, 2011; 2014; Ofsted, 2010).

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (dcsf, 2007b p.84) reports "Children who behave poorly and are excluded, those unable to attend a mainstream school and those disengaged from education are a relatively small proportion of pupils. However, they include some of the young people with the worst prospects for success in later life and are most likely to develop problem behaviours". For children with SEN this is especially worrying, as the Department for Education (DfE) writes "Pupils with SEN are… 20 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion and seven times more likely to receive a fixed-period exclusion [from school] than pupils with no identified SEN" (DfE, 2011 p.22). In 2017 the DfE reported that children with ESB Difficulties were by far the most likely of any group of school-age children to receive Fixed Term Exclusions (FTEs). In 2012/13, 20.3% of those enrolled with ESBD received one or more FTEs (DfE, 2014). Permanent exclusion from school is experienced by most by pupils with SEMH difficulties nationally, when compared to any other pupil grouping (DfE, 2017a).

In 2011, the DfE reinforced this concern for pupils with SEN, writing "At the moment, life chances for the approximately two million children in England identified with SEN…are disproportionately poor" (p.14). This may be reflected in outcomes such as academic achievement (DfE, 2011; 2014) or later in life, as an adult (Hart & Heaver, 2013). This concern is clearly demonstrated in the educational achievement statistics produced by the DfE which show that pupils with SEN achieve markedly less at school academically. This is evident with 16.5% of pupils with SEN achieving five or more A*-C GCSE qualifications (General Certificate of Secondary Education) by Key Stage 4 (see Definitions and Terms), compared to 61.3% of their non-SEN peers (DfE, 2011). Even more concerning is that in the academic year 2012/13 this had worsened with only 10% of pupils with SEN achieving five or more A* to C GCSEs (DfE, 2014).

These difficulties may begin early in a child's life and can have long term consequences when they reach adulthood. In 2014 the DfE reported that 9% of Early Years (under five

years old) children with SEMH had been assessed by teachers as having a good level of development, leaving 91% below a "good" judgement (DfE, 2014). Poor long-term outcomes for pupils with SEN are also evident in adulthood, such as in Hart and Heaver's (2013, p.39) finding that "Among the young offenders population, a staggering 25% have special educational needs". Again, the interplay of special needs, school performance and social exclusion is clear, sometimes even resulting in community exclusion, in the form of imprisonment (Friedli, 2009; Hart & Heaver, 2013). The SETF (2007 p.10) supports this view, stating "…children from families experiencing multiple disadvantages are: more likely to…have poor social networks; and more likely to have been in trouble with the police than children from families with fewer or no family disadvantages". Further challenges children with SEMH difficulties may experience are discussed in the following section.

Poorer Well-Being

Mental health difficulties are shown in increased incidences of depression and anxiety in children with special educational needs (Layard & Dunn, 2009). In her 2009 report to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Friedli (2009) presented the correlation between children diagnosed with Conduct Disorder (CD) and the likelihood of negative long-term outcomes associated with childhood behavioural problems as being; crime (4.13%), depression (1.57%), suicide (3%) and having no qualifications (1.45%). The Department of Health ((DoH),2015) agrees, with evidence of children diagnosed with CD being twice as likely to leave school with no qualifications. Gutman et al. (2010, p.pii) concur, writing "Children with special educational needs are more likely than others to experience poor and declining wellbeing through mid-childhood and adolescence". Layard and Dunn (2009) write that a young person aged 13 to 14 is 36 times as likely to be excluded from school and six times as likely to enter the care system or have contact with the police if they have experienced difficulties in their families, such as mental health problems, physical disability, substance misuse, domestic violence, financial stress, neither parent being in work, teenage parenthood, poor basic skills or living in poor housing conditions.

Behavioural, mental health and familial difficulties all appear to combine to create a prognosis for children with complex needs that is worse in general than for their counterparts. Research indicates that the potential for this scenario may be worsened by living in poverty (UNICEF, 2016). The complexity of *how* these factors interact in multi-directional ways for individuals contributed to researching what *does* work, and in which combinations, for children with complex needs. For now, the key messages from the literature are these: one causal explanation for myriad difficulties is not possible.

The impact of unequal contexts on children with complex needs is clear. In 1999, Prime Minister Blair instigated the Child Poverty Act of 2010, recognising the impact of disadvantage on children's long-term outcomes (Farthing, 2016). Since then, numerous government policies have attempted to close the disproportionate gaps that exist for children with complex needs, recognising the impact of contextual factors, such as poverty, and individual factors, such as SEN, on predicted life outcomes. Following is an outline of the main social and educational policies successive governments in the UK have presented over the past 17 years, in attempting to address these negative predicted trajectories for children with complex needs.

Government Policies: Closing the Gap through Collaboration

The predominant discourse promoted by state sector policies that have targeted the gap between children with and without complex needs is one of inter-agency partnership or collaborative work. Public sector agencies, such as schools, mental health services (referred to in the UK as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, or CAMHS), Social Care and the Police, are required to work in a way where the outputs of each complements the other, in the interests of those they serve. This has come about in acknowledgement of the contexts within which children with additional, complex needs are situated (e.g. dcsf, 2007b). Schools are expected to work as part of this collective (DoH, 2015). As Bryson and Crossley (2015, p.1) write "The role of school feature[s] prominently in governments child poverty strategy and this is a theme which has continued since Tony Blair [UK Prime Minister at the time] articulated his 'historic aim' to end children poverty 'within a generation' in 1999." This acknowledgement of the context of deprivation within which some children are situated, and the necessity of agencies supporting them and their families to work together, came from dissatisfaction with the disjointed, fragmented service provision prior to this that was having little impact on improving outcomes for them (dcsf, 2007a).

Policies and national reviews which have highlighted the need for collaborative work in the past 17 years include; The Children's Fund, (Ofsted, 2003), Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003), The Children's Plan (Department for Children, Schools and Families (dcsf, 2007a), the Child Adolescent and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Review (dcsf, 2007b), Support and Aspiration (DfE, 2011), Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs; DfE, 2014; Long, 2017), Future in Mind (DoH, 2015) and Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016). These policies all promote collaborative working and inter-agency partnership. No 'expert' should be working in isolation with a family that needed 'fixing' (a deficit model, (Walker, Hart & Hana, 2017)), but rather *with* the family, ensuring their voice and status was acknowledged in decisions and plans made to support them (BoingBoing, 2018a). The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ((NSPCC), 2017 p.8) report on transforming mental health services for children and young people states, "Mental health support should not be limited to a medical model and should explore the full potential of family, schools and the wider community network as part of the mental health offer". In 2017 the Department for Education (DfE, 2017c) acknowledged the role relationships play in school settings that support pupil's mental health needs.

This change in strategy acknowledged that families are the experts of their own lives. These policies aimed to pool familial, professional and third sector (see Definitions and Terms) expertise to improve outcomes for children, especially those "being left behind" (dcsf, 2007a). They recognised the importance of addressing disparities for children with complex needs, as seen in statements such as "Every child, whether in a mainstream or special setting, deserves a world-class education to ensure that they fulfil their potential" (DfE, 2011 p.57). A paradigm shift is evident from a deficit model, whereby families were viewed as having difficulties which needed to be 'fixed' by an 'expert', to that of an ecological model, which demanded interagency collaboration and family-professional partnerships which sought to understand and work with families within their own contexts, at varying levels.

Further to these policies, a green paper (sent out to interested parties by the UK Government for consultation and feedback) was released jointly by the Department of Health and the Department of Education in December 2017 entitled "Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision". This paper intends to build on the Department of Health's (2015) Future in Mind policy whereby better partnership work was called for by those agencies working for the most vulnerable children in the UK. The recommendations outlined in the green paper aim for schools to be able to intervene more quickly than is the current practice and prevent mental health difficulties escalating in children. The recommendations of the green paper is to ensure all schools have Designated Senior Leads for mental health, that the government funds mental health support teams that are linked to schools to improve provision and to expedite access for those needing health services. How the school in this research has been advanced in seeking and allocating a designated mental health lead before publication of the green paper is referred to later in Chapter Nine.

These policies have had limited impact on children who have complex needs, as the statistics in Part One indicate. Recently Agasisti, Avvisati, Borgonovi and Longobardi (2018) reviewed the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data which includes 15-year-old pupils proficient in reading, mathematics and science in over 50 countries and economies. They found that the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who demonstrated resilience in the UK has remained largely unchanged between 2006 (28%) and 2015 (28.2%). In the same year, Wilkinson and Pickett (2018) reported when compared to other economically developed countries, the United Kingdom performs worse on the proportion of disadvantaged students who are resilient to their socio-economic backgrounds. Recommendations from this work for what schools can do to improve the resilience of disadvantaged pupils is discussed throughout this thesis.

However, some successes have been achieved during this time. Examples of this in education are evident in both the DfES' (DfES, 2003) report on progress made with closing the achievement gap for children in schools, and the DfE's (2011) review of SEN. Between 2007 and 2009, pupils' achievement in Key Stage One and Two (see Definitions and Terms) in England improved in English and maths, for SEN and non-SEN pupils alike (DfE, 2011). The most recent United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund (UNICEF) report (2016) which compares inequality and well-being in rich countries shows the achievement gap for children in the lowest tenth centile in the UK had improved since the previous report of 2013. When deciphering the progress made educationally for children with SEN and additional needs as a group, the educational outcomes are not as positive, if they are in fact reported at all. The 2016 UNICEF review of inequalities admits to omitting children with special needs from its research. This is due to issues similar to those to be discussed in Chapter Three, where resilience research in schools, and school-based programmes often exclude children with special needs.

As referred to in Chapter Three, educational outcomes in Newham are high nationally, despite it being a highly deprived Borough (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016). However, opportunities later in life do not equate (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016). There are also new opportunities developing that support resilience in children living in deprivation, such as the Blackpool Opportunity Area Fund (BoingBoing,

2018b; DfE, 2017b), co-ordinating co-produced services at various levels of children's ecologies. The impact of such funding initiatives remains to be seen in the future. Regardless of the difficulties children living in deprived contexts such as Newham (LBN, 2014) and Blackpool (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016) face, positive outcomes can be achieved with them.

However, outcomes for children with complex needs have remained largely unchanged over time. Social policy researchers describe these children as remaining on the periphery of their communities, continuing to experience varied and multiple difficulties (Layard & Dunn, 2009). A disproportionate 'gap' in overall outcomes exists between children who have complex needs and those who do not. This can be especially pertinent to children with SEN as part of their 'needs matrix' (see Table 1.1, Chapter One). The DfE's (2011; 2014; 2016) own research illustrates children with SEN not achieving what their same-age peers do academically. In 2017 the DfE reported that 22.6% of pupils with a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan were persistent absentees from school, almost three times higher than pupils without SEN. In 2012/13 on average, 10.3% of learning sessions were missed by pupils with ESB difficulties (DfE, 2014). Disappointingly, the figures released for absenteeism were markedly comparable in 2008/09 at 9% (DfE, 2011). This increase in absenteeism between 2008/09 and 2012/13 again illustrates a failure of government policies to achieve better outcomes for children with SEN. What had been done up to this point was having little impact on outcomes for children with complex needs. Consideration needed to be given to what may be more successful.

Care is needed when interpreting and analysing data. In its national statistical release in 2014 on children with SEN, the DfE reported that the number of SEN pupils had fallen by 3.2% between 2010 and 2014 – apparent cause for celebration. The implication being that government policies were achieving results for children before they were categorised as having SEN, therefore meeting their needs, and earlier. Conversely, Hourigan (2013) reported that nationally numbers of children with ESB difficulties rose between 2005 and 2010 by 23%. The discrepancy in these figures may be attributable to the government's alteration of the definition of SEN itself. In 2010 pupils regarded to have SEN were classified as such on three levels – school action and school action plus (both groups accommodated for in mainstream schools with additional support) and "statemented" (see Definitions and Terms) children (typically accommodated for in special schools). School action and school action plus figures were no longer included in the statistics from 2014 onwards (see DfE, 2017a), a possible explanation for some of this decrease in SEN numbers. On face value, one could be under the impression that the collaborative paradigm is having a positive impact on children with complex needs, but, as shown, careful scrutiny of the statistics is needed.

Despite the good intentions of these policies, the agencies involved in collaborative work with the families of children with complex needs have, by their own admission, found this difficult, for various reasons (DoH, 2015; Public Health England (PHE), 2015). The DfE (2011, p.6) itself writes "It [partnership work] can be slow and complicated, with different services working in isolation and each having its own approach". Many factors contribute to these difficulties between individuals and agency workers alike, including resource allocation, role remits, physical boundaries and communication. In 2016 Sir Michael Wilshaw, then Chief Inspector at Ofsted, responsible for inspecting schools and standards achieved by them, stated to The Evening Standard Newspaper "'We have a confusing and ill-defined system of

oversight and intervention. Problems, inevitably, are shuffled between various agencies'" (Davis, 23rd February, 2016).

The CAMHS review of multi-agency, collaborative working in 2007 (dcsf b) states that successfully achieving partnership goals often "…depends on the willingness of individuals to communicate as part of an agreed plan" (p.24). One must wonder what situation is created for families, if this 'will' is non-existent. Meanwhile, children with complex needs continue to have worse life prognoses than their peers (Layard & Dunn, 2009; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Given the difficulty in even defining what the issues for children with complex needs are that require support, it comes as no surprise that multiple agencies, with various boundaries, thresholds, financial resources, inter-agency and agency-family relationships find it difficult to work together.

Schools as "Islands of Hope…"

On-going evidence demonstrates that life prospects for children with complex needs have not improved markedly (DfE, 2014; 2017). Coupled with the difficulties of collaborative, inter-agency working (DoH, 2015; PHE, 2015), the recognised impact of poverty and disadvantage on children with complex needs remains the same. In 2007 the dcsf (2007a, p.3) stated that "…too many children's education is still being held back by poverty and disadvantage…" The context of poverty remains the same, and is in fact, predicted to worsen (Bryson & Crossley, 2015). Yet as Bryson and Crossley (2015, p.1) state "None of the [current UK government's] proposals are aimed directly at improving the material conditions of children themselves". This considered, outcomes for children with complex needs are unlikely to change.

I contend that the well-intentioned partnership discourse fails to address the developmental and contextual gaps for children with complex needs. A different approach needs to be practised that emphasises the difficulties of collaborative work and the surrounding context. This approach should acknowledge children in their context and to work creatively in ways that build upon their strengths, instead of solely considering 'deficits', in order to close the disproportionate gaps some children with complex needs experience. An evidence-based approach is needed that recognises individuals' assets, their contexts and their achievements within this context (Hart et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2017). This work can be informed by research so that families and professionals can access and utilise these evidenced, successful approaches. Resilience research in schools may offer some hope for children with complex needs, because it recognises the bi-directional interplay of an individual and their context. It is a concept based on evidence, building on strengths and assets, whilst also recognising the contexts people live in, using an ecological framework.

Summary

This Chapter has provided an overview of the contexts of the children involved in this research – possibly involving economic deprivation, physical, social and community difficulties, along with special educational needs. The literature tells us clearly that the predicted life prognoses for children who experience such clusters of difficulties are typically poor. Many government policies have aimed to address these challenges, and some have had successes. However, the impact has not been substantial. I argue that evidence-based, resilience-building approaches could have a sustained and positive impact on outcomes for

children with complex needs. In my view, this is especially so in schools, where staff are situated to meet pupils' needs holistically. Chapter Three introduces and defines the construct of resilience and explores how it may be applicable to children with complex needs. Current criticisms, which have been highlighted in the literature become evident, and potential remedies to these limitations are also discussed.

Chapter Three: Literature Review. How Can Resilience Research in Schools Support Children with Complex Needs?

Introduction

As previously highlighted, challenges that children with complex needs have may not always interplay in a negative manner – positive outcomes may be borne of them. The correlation between environmental (e.g. economic resources), individual (e.g. mental health) and familial (e.g. domestic violence) difficulties is clear. This does not, however indicate a definitive negative trajectory for children with complex needs, as evidenced through Rutter's (1999) concept of a "steeling effect". The concept of resilience is founded upon this notion - strengths and assets being used by individuals to overcome or develop in spite of adversity. Resilience research focuses on why this is the case. Learning from such research can then be used to inform families, communities and professionals alike as to what combination of strategies may maximise this potential. Findings from resilience-based research may also be applied in schools.

A holistic overview of the contexts that children are situated in is supported by an ecological or systemic theoretical base. This model views a child within the complex multi-directional interplay of structures surrounding them, which they may exert agency over, or have exerted upon them. An ecological model enables researchers to situate children within their context and attempt to understand the complexity surrounding them, to support their needs and work with them, as experts on their own lives. The ecological framework is further discussed in this Chapter, in consideration of what models might work for children with complex needs in schools.

A Changing Concept over Time: The Four Waves of Resilience Research

Resilience is a concept that recognises the potential for people to experience adversity and to overcome this adversity in an adaptive way. Definitions of what resilience is have evolved over time. Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000) state that differences in definitions historically has led to criticism of the construct. They defend the conceptualisation of resilience, asserting that, by its very nature, research in the field will be varied, broad and multifaceted, as it is when researching similarly broad aspects of human behaviour and development, such as parent-child relationships. To avoid such criticism, Luthar et al. (2000) state that resilience needs to be carefully defined, using specific language and that the term be used with caution. As with the difficulty in defining complex needs previously discussed, they suggest giving more elaborate and specific labels to the constructs researchers are attempting to describe, such as "vulnerable stable" and "vulnerable and reactive" (Luthar et al., 2000 p.548). Luthar et al. (2000) also suggest that it may also be of benefit to do this when attempting to measure the construct, or aspects of it.

Luthar et al. (2000) go on to define resilience as "…a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543). They write that "Implicit within this notion are two critical conditions: (1) exposure to significant threat of severe adversity; and (2) the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process" (Luthar et al., 2000 p543). This definition has been contributed to by over forty years of research in the field by key authors and leading researchers of resilience, such as Garmezy (1974), Werner and Smith (1982), Rutter (1993; 1999), Luthar et

al. (2000) and Masten (2007). The historical development of the concept of resilience is discussed in this section.

Luthar et al. (2000) go on to write that the *degree* of resilience shown by individuals may differ, according to the nature of the adversity they have faced. The case could be argued that children with complex needs show resilience in some aspects of their lives, but not in others, as Alistair and Simone's vignettes in Chapter One indicate. One child in a special school may be motivated to come to school daily because they see it as a safe haven with trusted adults. Another child may have developed a close friendship with a peer, something which is perhaps more likely in the smaller special school context, where relationships can be closely nurtured. However, either child may still be excluded from after school clubs, they may be struggling academically, or they may exhibit physical aggression toward others. They still attend special schools as their development does not meet age-expected requirements in mainstream schools, indicating that their positive adaptation to adversity has not been maximised. It could be argued that they are showing degrees of resilience but need to be supported to develop it more holistically (Rutter, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000).

Consideration of Luthar's assertions regarding the need to find pertinent and clear definitions of resilience that may be more applicable to children with complex needs has been given. I initially considered her following definition to be helpful to this research; "…[resilience is] manifest behavioural success at negotiating salient developmental tasks in spite of major stressors and possible underlying emotional distress: that is, in terms of overt social competence among high risk resilient people, not necessarily paralleled by covert mental health" (Luthar in Wolff, 1995 p566). This definition is relevant to pupils at Eleanor Smith School (ESS) because it highlights the importance of behavioural success.

Experiencing behavioural success is key, as concerning behavioural performance is the basis upon which some pupils are referred to special schools, and often means they are excluded from mainstream schools and their wider communities. They may also fail to negotiate salient developmental tasks, in that they may be emotionally immature compared to their same-age peers, they may not form relationships with others that are appropriate to their chronological age and they may struggle academically, due to their complex needs. Upon further consideration, I later decided upon Aumann and Hart's (2009) definition of complex needs in children, coupled with Hart, Blincow and Thomas' (2007) definition of resilience to be more pertinent to this work, as outlined in a subsequent section 'A Definition of Resilience for Complex Needs'. This then led to consideration of how complex needs could be best be supported at ESS.

Recalling Alistair and Simone's vignettes (see Chapter One), children with complex needs have all been exposed to major stressors in their lives and may not be as socially competent as their peers or have reached developmental or academic milestones, having been exposed to, and experienced numerous risks (Rutter, 1999). Given the complexity of the factors these children face, recognition of their context is essential, as in an ecological model (see Figure 3.1). This is especially useful for children with complex needs who may experience significant adversity. A history of the development of the construct of resilience and how it has been defined follows, along with a discussion of the current directions resilience research is taking, from an ecological perspective.

The nature of resilience research has changed over time, due to areas of interest expanding and becoming more focused in specific fields within the concept itself. Bottrell (2013 p.1) writes "Over forty years of research has explored a wide range of adversities, protective, buffering, restorative or promotive processes enabling people's coping, recovery, wellbeing and capacity to lead dignified, meaningful, successful lives". Garmezy's work in the United States in the 1970s with children of mothers diagnosed with schizophrenia laid the foundations for research into what made some children resilient (Garmezy, 1974; Goldstein & Brooks, 2004), while others were observed to not cope as well (Masten & Powell, 2003). Ann Masten's research went on to study people diagnosed with schizophrenia who coped well with the symptoms and identified that their social competence appeared to be the key to this (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). Also over this period, the longitudinal work of Werner and Smith on the Island of Kauai, Hawaii, contributed to the identification of traits, which came to be labelled 'protective factors' (Werner, 1989). Werner found that nearly a third of the studied population were affected by what came to be termed "risk factors" and that having a disadvantaged background did not mean people did not have social mobility, as may have been assumed.

At this time, the deficits model dominated the theoretical frameworks of science and psychology, both positivist traditions, whereby illness was thought to be located within the individual. Masten (2001) and Windle, Bennett and Noyes (2011) write that the concept of resilience was a challenge to this model. This challenge is referred to as the model of salutogenesis. Salutogensis may be defined as the "…processes that advance wellness outcomes" (Antonovsky in Cowen, Wyman & Work, 1996, p.269), seeking the origins of health (Rak & Patterson, 1996, p.369), or "…focusing on factors that support human health and well-being, rather than on those that cause disease" (Garrett, 2016, p.1914). Coupled with the philosophy of salutogenesis and the identification of both risk and protective factors coming to light, the construct of resilience developed, based on human strengths and factors external to them that support these.

When describing the development of the construct of resilience, some academics in the field refer to four waves of resilience research, the most recent of which is recognising the importance of context to human development and growth (e.g. Masten, 2007; Pooley & Cohen, 2010). More recently, the work of Hart, Gagnon, Eryigit-Madzwamuse, Cameron, Aranda and Heaver (2016) suggests taking an inequalities, or social justice approach to resilience research. It is generally accepted that there are four waves of resilience research, these being; identifying factors (strengths, first wave) and processes (second wave), investigating the mechanisms at work between factors and processes (interventions, third wave), and researching those interventions within contexts (ecological, fourth wave). The following section outlines the four waves of resilience research and introduces contributions made by researchers to conceptualising the construct.

The First Wave - Factors

It is generally acknowledged that the first wave of resilience research involved identifying qualities unique to a person that made them more likely to adapt positively in the face of adversity. In her paper on the development of four waves of resilience research, Masten (2007, p.922) states "The 'short list' of commonly observed correlates of resilience was the product of the first wave of work" Garmezy's work initiated some interest in the life trajectories of children experiencing adversity, specifically how some responded differently

to their circumstances. This contributed to the identification of factors that may promote such adaptation occurring (Garmezy, 1974). Further research developing these theories began to emerge as a consequence.

Werner and Smith (Werner, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1982) were also pioneers of the first wave, specifically referring to the studied concept as "resilience". Their research evidenced individuals' vulnerability, or adaptation, in impoverished circumstances. Like Garmezy, Werner and Smith investigated why some people exposed to risk in a context of adversity struggled, while others exposed to the same risks adapted positively. They delineated individual factors that appeared to make one 'resilient' or 'not resilient' – a fixed trait located within the person (Werner & Smith, 1982), producing a list of factors that contributed to this concept of 'resilient beings'. Subsequent resilience research, such as that of Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgitt and Target, (1994) in the area of maternal attachment in infancy, added to this. There was however, dissatisfaction with resilient traits being viewed as located within an individual, and as a fixed state, whereby one was either resilient, or non-resilient, and this was no longer considered to be the case.

The Second and Third Waves – Processes and Mechanisms

In response to this discourse, the second wave of resilience research followed. The processes of how factors worked together began to be investigated by researchers such as Rutter (1999), investigating what 'mechanisms' were at work. Masten (2007, p.922) wrote "…investigators in the second wave of resilience science began the formidable task of uncovering the processes that might account for the observed correlates of resilience". During the development of the resilience construct, a shift in focus occurred from identifying protective factors that enhance a child's ability to be resilient, to instead looking at the developmental processes associated with healthy outcomes (Ungar, 2005). These processes, which can be internal or external to the child, may have an impact on these outcomes. Instead of resilience being considered as a stable trait, personal to individuals, resilience researchers began to view the construct as a dynamic process (Rutter, 1999; Ungar, 2005). Rutter (1999, p.135) summarised this, writing "Resilience involves a range of processes that bring together quite diverse mechanisms operating before, during and after an encounter with the stress experience of adversity that is being considered, and it is necessary to appreciate how these need to operate". This necessity of understanding how mechanisms operate encapsulates the research of the third wave.

Rutter (1993) argued that mechanisms are the crux of resilience because what may act as a risk in one situation does not necessarily apply in others. He went on to assert that there are a variety of mechanisms by which risk factors operate and that resilience varies according to these mechanisms. This would explain the differing experiences pupils in this research have, while navigating and managing the context and some difficulties held in common (see Table 1.1; Chapter One). In her therapeutic work with children, Wolff (1995) supported Rutter's (1993) assertion, using intelligence as an example. She posited that children with higher intelligence and a sensitive temperament may be more alert to the frightening aspects of life that children without this make up may not yet recognise before they are mature enough to cope with such realisations. Subsequently, being more intelligent and temperamentally sensitive than your peers may be a strength in some circumstances, but a vulnerability at other times. For example, for Alistair, it appears that his strong relationship

with his teacher has been assisted by the loss of his sister (mother figure) in Pakistan two years ago. One may predict that after losing such a strong attachment figure, he may not easily form trusting relationships with adults in the future. Conversely, the strong bond he had with his sister in Pakistan may have aided him in attaching to others more easily in the United Kingdom (UK). At this point, the context individuals lived within and negotiated on a daily basis, was being largely overlooked by resilience researchers. Questions remained concerning the degree to which context may influence people's lives and their ability to adapt to risk and adversity.

The Fourth Wave

In answer to such concerns, Bronfennbrenner (1994), a key theorist and researcher in developmental psychology, expressed dissatisfaction with the dominant positivist paradigm informing the discipline in the 1970s. Alternatively, he introduced the idea that people needed to be studied as multi person systems that interact with their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Figure 3.1). This idea supported Rutter's notion of a complex interplay of mechanisms being at work. Bronfenbrenner's model came about in reaction to a lack of consideration being given to children's real-life settings and experiences, along with research being conducted under artificial experimental conditions, such as those in the field of psychology at the time (see Definitions and Terms for behavioural model). This disregard was a criticism of third wave resilience work.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) contended that human behaviour is not unidirectional and that the environment affects behaviour also. He suggested that proximal processes "… reciprocal interaction(s) between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.38) can have a huge impact on human development, regardless of genetics. Influential resilience researchers such as Lerner (2004), Masten (2001) and Rutter (1999) also support this bi-directional relationship between the environment and the child, stating that they each influence the other.
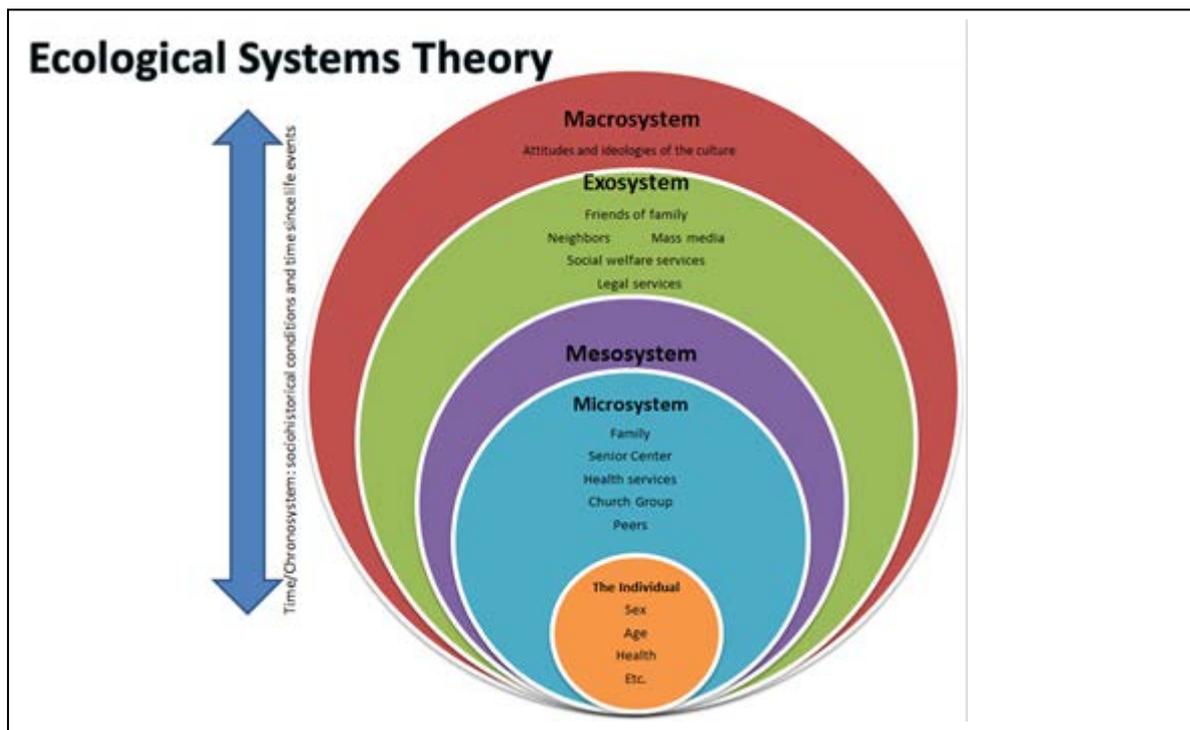
Figure 3.1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model, 1977
(see http://www.transitionalcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ecological-systems-theory.png)

Masten's work contributed to the most recent development in resilience research - the fourth wave. Masten (2007, p.923) stated that the "…fourth wave of resilience science…will overtake and assimilate earlier work, building on knowledge gained from earlier waves and [be] fed by the energy generated by new technologies and the synergy from integrative theory and methodology". Masten and Wright (in Pooley & Cohen, 2010, p.30) describe the fourth wave as "…integrative ways to understand the complex processes that lead to resilience". Fourth wave research attempts to view individuals within Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model (see Figure 3.1), at the micro, meso, exo and macro levels of systems, acknowledging the impact of social and economic factors (Hart et al., 2016). Bottrell (2013) and Ungar (2008) support this, arguing that history and culture also need to be recognised as having potential impacts on those under investigation, and how both these macro-systemic 'layers' influence outcomes for people.

Lerner (2004) purports that a developmental systems (ecological) model supports the study of resilience. This model recognises that person, place and time all interact. He contended that both general and individual laws should be studied, writing "All people are like all other people, all people are like some other people, and each person is like no other person" (Lerner, 2004, p.329). Lerner (2004) wrote of plasticity and the importance of the potential for change across the lifespan – a change from the stable trait that resilience was considered to be in first wave research. He stated that individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities are all plastic and that strengths can be integrated with assets in communities in order to promote positive change (Lerner 2004). Such contentions led to resilience researchers beginning to consider how this complex mix of influences and factors

may be used to promote resilience within people and communities more broadly; a fourth wave perspective. Methodological and political criticisms have been made of fourth wave work, which will be explained in detail in the following sections. Table 3.1 summarises the focus of resilience research waves, and corresponding definitions.

Wave	Scope of Investigations	Definition Example
One	Individual factors	"…successful adaptation following exposure to stressful life events" (Werner, 1989, p.72).
Two	Processes	"Resilience involves a range of processes that bring together quite diverse mechanisms operating before, during and after an encounter with the stress experience of adversity that is being considered, and it is necessary to appreciate how these need to operate" (Rutter, 1999, p.135)
Three	Mechanisms	"…exposure to significant threat of severe adversity; and the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process" (Luthar et al., 2000, p.543)
Four	Dynamic interplay, ecology	"The capacity of a dynamic system to withstand and recover from significant challenges that threaten its stability, viability, or development" (Masten, 2001, p.6)

Table 3.1: The Four Waves of Resilience Research and Definitions, adapted from Hart et al., (2016).

A Definition of Resilience for Complex Needs

As with the changing definitions of resilience over time, the definitions that I considered most pertinent to my research changed. At the outset of this research, my conceptualisation of resilience was guided by Hart et al. (2007, p.10), where they state "resilience is evident where people with persistently few assets and resources, and major vulnerabilities…have better outcomes than we might expect…" This definition appealed to me because of the acknowledgement of contexts of inequalities and deprivation – applicable to the children in this research.

However, as the investigation continued, a later definition proposed by Pooley and Cohen (2010, p.30), where they view resilience as individuals having "…the potential to exhibit resourcefulness [agency] by using available internal and external recourses in response to different contextual and developmental challenges", was used to contextualise how resilience may be experienced by pupils with complex needs. The attraction of this definition for my work is that it acknowledges context, along with developmental challenges and issues pupils with complex needs negotiate and navigate (Ungar, 2010) on a daily basis. It also complements Hart et al.'s (2007) definition of resilience to be outlined. Fourth wave definitions were also relevant, as this thesis asserted the need for a whole school approach to be taken, addressing pupils' school community context – one of the many structures exerting an influence on their ecologies. As mentioned, there are criticisms of fourth wave research however, and these are addressed in the following sections.

Methodological Criticisms and Complex Needs

Resilience research has broadened its view of the possibilities of human impact on contexts, along with the influence of environmental influences on people (Ungar, 2005; 2008). Its focus on strengths and asset building is attractive to some, especially when considering working with those who have been seen as having 'problems' through an internalised deficit model paradigm. In the past, children with complex needs have typically been omitted from resilience research for many reasons, not always consciously. Even internationally funded organisations investigating positive life outcomes for children living in deprivation recognises this difficulty (UNICEF, 2016).

This concern relates directly to children with complex needs which may include having SEN and attendant difficulties. Hart et al. (2016, p.6) contend that this happens in resilience research because these populations are often "…the hardest to reach and with the most complex needs". In their review of resilience research including children with additional needs, Hart et al. (2016, p.7) write "…all these studies [did not] necessarily set out to exclude children and young people with disabilities and complex needs, but their prevalence in the research evidence base suggested a level of disability blindness and an 'ableist mindset'. This was clearly the case in Hart and Heaver's review (2013) of school-based resilience approaches whereby out of 3,200 child participants in 12 pieces of research, only six had learning difficulties. Resilience researchers are failing to plan for and include children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and to predict and accommodate for their needs satisfactorily. Subsequently, there is a paucity of knowledge in resilience research that offers direction for approaches that support children with complex needs and suggestions to improve outcomes for them. This research will therefore contribute original knowledge to the resilience literature base by including children with complex needs.

Further methodological criticisms of resilience research include; lack of sustainability of programmes (Hart & Heaver, 2013), 'tame' populations being selected to do the research on or with (Hart et al., 2016), not using accessible measures (Hart & Heaver, 2013), a lack of whole school approaches, whereby "Most resilience programmes are 'bolt-on' to classes" (Hart & Coombe, 2014 p.4) and oversight of the potential of co-produced knowledge (Nind, 2008). Hart and Heaver's (2013, p.44) call to ensure resilience research leaves a sustainable legacy is summarised in their writing "In general little consideration was given to sustainability, for example interventions delivered by teachers/parents can be adopted and continued after the study has been completed, whereas researchers will leave at the end of the intervention". Further criticisms are addressed in more detail below.

Tame Populations

'Tame' populations are typically those who "…will sit quietly and complete the pen and paper or computer-based measures that the researchers administer, with minimal supervision and in the fastest time" (Hart et al., 2016, p.9). Children with complex needs may have learning or mental health difficulties that make this more challenging, which clearly leads to those who are not able to maintain focus for sustained periods of time being underrepresented in resilience research. Consequently, a group of children who could benefit from resilience research findings are being omitted (Hart et al., 2016). Hart and Heaver (2013, p.39) concur with Hart et al. (2016) when they state "Arguably, their inclusion

in resilience programs is even more important for disabled children and young people, as they are already being given fewer opportunities and resources than their typical-developing peers". The issues for children with complex needs as outlined within this thesis, clearly support this assertion.

Inaccessible Measures

Children with complex needs may also be excluded from resilience research due to their inability to access mainstream measures that would typically be used with a sample, such as questionnaires, surveys and interviews (Hart & Heaver, 2013). Given that the co-morbidity between children with diagnosed learning difficulties and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties is 71%, and language difficulties and SEMH difficulties is 57% (Benner, Nelson & Epstein, 2002), the need to use accessible measures is critical. To remedy this, Hart et al. (2016) assert the need to use more accessible measures, such as easier to read, pictorial or symbolic formats that would aid inclusion. They go on to write "…exclusion was…subtle, reducing the likelihood of their cohort including any children and young people with complex needs by: (a) using written or computer-administered program materials that may be inaccessible to students with learning, reading, or communication difficulties" (Hart et al. 2016, p.9). These assertions led to me very carefully choosing methods I hoped would be more accessible to the children in this research.

Lack of Whole School Approaches

Another criticism of resilience research with school aged children is that it does not use whole school approaches. In their review, Hart and Heaver (2013 p.32) draw our attention to this, stating "Two of the interventions [out of a total of 84] were systemic 'whole-school' approaches". This was clearly evident in the literature search for this research also. Even literature that claims to promote a whole school approach in its title, such as "Creating a Climate in which Students Can Flourish: A Whole School Intercultural Approach" (Read, Aldridge, Ala'i, Fraser & Fozdar, 2015) often only includes teachers as participants. Failing to include all members of a school community in resilience research negates some of the key findings from the first wave; we know factors such as having one significant adult in a child's life can have positive outcomes for them (Fonagy et al., 1994; Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Hart & Heaver, 2013). Creating a whole school 'ethos', and thereby developing resilience throughout both the school and wider community may tackle difficulties more thoroughly for children with complex needs. For a systematic review of current whole school approaches being used in the UK, refer to Hart and Heaver (2015).

As Friedli (2009, p.40) writes "Education that equips children to flourish both economically and emotionally increase uptake of [whole school approaches], involving teachers, pupils, parents and the wider community". Coupled with this, Public Health England (2015) highlights the current Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection framework that is used to judge the provision schools give pupils, writing "The inspection criteria states that the role of teaching is to promote learning and the acquisition of knowledge by pupils and to raise achievement, but also to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" (p.11). This focus is on the whole child, not just academic achievement. It is being demanded of schools that they now address pupils' needs holistically and there is an expectation that schools will use whole school approaches to do so (Mental Health Task Force, 2016). My research has contributed to an approach signposted in the first chapter,

now known as the Academic Resilience Approach (ARA). The findings (see Chapter Nine) research have built on the work of colleagues from BoingBoing as outlined in Chapters One and Three. The ARA model is a way of school staff planning strategically to change the negative 'odds' for vulnerable pupils at multiple systemic levels (BoingBoing, 2014). It is being used locally and nationally by schools as a whole school approach that addresses individual school's identified priorities. More detail about the contribution this work made to the development of ARA is outlined in Chapter Ten.

Co-Production of Knowledge

A call is also made in the inequalities literature for researchers to include those being studied *in* the study; for research to be done *with*, not *at* (Farthing, 2016). Many resilience researchers demand the necessity of co-produced knowledge, using participatory methodologies (see Walmsley, 2004; Nind, 2008). By doing so researchers can present data drawn from those whose experiences they may not have themselves. Hart et al. (2016) challenge resilience researchers to design their investigations based on the disability rights slogan quoted for example in the Department of Health's ((DoH) 2015, p.18) children and adolescent's policy document "Future in Mind" - "no decision about me without me". Hart et al. (2016) contend that methodologies which access co-produced knowledge are more appropriate to understanding the dynamic processes and mechanisms involved in living in adversity and contexts of inequalities, and that by doing so, transformational change is more likely to occur as a result; a social justice contention (Hart et al., 2016, p.7). They go on to argue that by co-producing knowledge, resilience researchers are "...developing richer understandings of resilience [and] capturing the costs of resilience, detecting hidden resilience and while also empowering people and communities with the tools and voice to contribute toward challenging processes of injustice" (Bolzan & Gale, 2012, in Hart et al., 2016, p.6); Mertens (2016) concurs.

Referring to the importance of resilience research findings relating to those living in specific contexts, such as in deprivation, Hart et al. (2016) challenge the status quo with their argument that it is time to bring resilience research and practice change together, and that by doing so, social transformation in the form of social justice, is more likely to happen. Their view is that to achieve this, participatory research methods are demanded (Hart et al., 2016). Participatory methods are seen to satisfy a current gap in resilience research, whereby those who could benefit from contributing to, shaping and using the process are excluded from it, sometimes intentionally. Considerations such as these that emanated from the literature review for this work informed the methodologies I used, which are expanded upon in Chapter Four.

The inequality-poor outcomes link is confirmed and has been for years (UNICEF, 2016). It is time to stop producing the same, predictable statistics and act upon why they are being repeated nationally, year upon year (e.g. DfE 2011, 2014, 2017). According to the Social Mobility Index (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016; see Definitions and Terms), children in disadvantaged Newham receive high quality education. However, post-secondary education, a weak employment market and high housing costs make subsequent opportunities low in Newham when compared to other areas. There is some hope where those in political power pay attention to fourth wave research, as the borough where this research is situated is doing, via its Resilience Strategy (LBN, 2014). In its self-published

paper, the borough writes "These are experiences and benefits taken for granted in wealthier families; the children of Newham and other disadvantaged areas deserve no less" (LBN, 2014 p.24). The borough has acknowledged the link between academic achievement and fewer economic resources, providing free school meals for all pupils, regardless of economic need. Doing so, it has found that, when compared to pupils in similar areas, Newham pupils made between four and eight weeks more academic progress over a two-year period (LBN, 2014 p.18). Encouragingly, Newham has acknowledged that a change is needed in the system whereby pupils receive a state-funded school meal if their family income is low, recognising that all children can benefit from whole systems thinking and responding accordingly. The borough is supporting its children to attain better educational results but is still not challenging the causal factors placing its pupils in this position in the first place; a plaster on a wound.

Political Criticisms of Resilience Research

The failure of resilience research to include those in contexts other than mainstream, non-SEN schools-based populations has led to what may be viewed as a political criticism. Along with the methodological criticisms discussed, some resilience researchers are calling for the knowledge produced in the field to tackle inequalities, and the impact of these upon children. The correlation between deprivation and special needs, among other risk factors, and predicted poor outcomes is clear (Friedli, 2009). In the *British Medical Journal*, Pickett and Wilkinson (2007, p.1) stated that a UNICEF report comparing 40 indicators of child wellbeing in rich countries, concluded that children in Britain fared less well than in any of the other 21 countries. Their assertion is that the bigger the discrepancy between those with higher and lower economic status in a country, the worse overall child wellbeing is. The UK has such an income gap. Children in this group were found to have lower aspirations, higher feelings of loneliness, and fewer friends and were more likely to aspire to less skilled work than children from higher socioeconomic groups (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2007). More recently, in its 2016 global review of educational outcomes for children, UNICEF found the achievement gap had closed slightly for children in the UK. However, other markers of child well-being, such as physical health, had deteriorated. These risk factors, identified within first wave research, have the potential to impact negatively on children's resilience.

An Inequalities Approach

Despite the fourth wave attempt to understand complex processes and biopsychosocial influences, criticism of resilience research remains. Work such as that of Hart et al. (2016) identifies another gap in resilience research. Their challenge to resilience researchers is for them to consider the strong position they may be in to be able to explore the lived experiences of those living in disadvantage *with* them. The knowledge co-produced with their collaborators could then be used to influence those at the exosystem and macrosystem levels of the ecological model to change systems and structures that are unequal and may enable or exacerbate poor outcomes for these groups. Bottrell (2013) and Ungar (2005) recognise this weakness also, contending that the ecological or systems approach alone is not adequate to explore the diversity of people's experiences. This notion particularly appealed to me, leading me to consider whether we could use an approach that changed the way schools support their pupils in the future.

In their article on viewing resilience research through an inequalities lens, Hart et al. (2016) express dissatisfaction with the first four waves of resilience research, especially for those living in contexts of deprivation and complexity. They write that the first wave, with its focus on individual qualities, may be more likely to continue the effects of inequality than, to ameliorate them (Hart et al., 2016); the individual being responsible for using their strengths to address the adversity they experience. They go on to write that the second wave of research at least acknowledges the wider communities surrounding children and how they play their part in influencing resilience (Hart et al., 2016). According to these researchers, the third wave of testing and experiments that typically occurred can be critiqued for "Applying what is defined as a positive outcome within mainstream contexts to disadvantaged and marginalised groups…" (Hart et al., 2016, p. 5), an application that may not be relevant to that population.

They go on to express disappointment with the fourth wave of research also, stating that the impact of factors from proximal layers of children's ecologies are acknowledged, however "… [consideration of] more distal processes remains fairly cursory" (Hart et al., 2016, p.5). These distal processes may include systemic structures that impact on children, such as governmental policies and, the availability of economic resources and environmental influences, such as those found in wider communities. This led to their mooting an inequalities view of resilience interventions, whereby consideration is given to children's contexts at all levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model, specifically with a social justice agenda addressing social, political and economic disadvantage. The definition they suggest for this conceptualisation of resilience research states "Resilience is overcoming adversity, whilst also potentially changing, or even dramatically transforming (aspects of) that adversity" (Hart & Heaver, 2013, p.31).

Hart and colleagues concerned with inequalities recognise the need for the field to acknowledge the contexts of those they are working with. As previously stated, if systemic change is not made, the same prognoses for children with complex needs are highly probable to reoccur. Seventeen years ago, Prilleltensky, Nelson and Peirson (2001, p.151) wrote "When conditions across spheres of life do not support adequate resources, values, policies and programmes, and when there are few or no compensatory mechanisms available, we can predict problems for children with relative certainty". If these 'spheres of life' (layers in an ecology) are not recognised, resilience research is unlikely to have maximum impact on outcomes for children with complex needs.

A broader view is needed of varying ecologies and the impacts and influences of these (Ungar, 2005). Hart et al. (2016) answer this, stating resilience research should approach its work through a social justice lens, "…any attempt to understand resilient moves must acknowledge these attempts are set within a nexus of global health practices seeking to address or tackle inequalities…additional attention[should be given] to the materiality of policies, reports, public health documents and strategies…" (Hart et al., 2016 p.6). They go on to say "From a social justice perspective however, responsibility lies to a large extent with governments, and global decision makers in their power to determine the economic, social and health policies that shape the wider socioeconomic conditions in which individuals live" (Hart et al., 2016, p.6), removing the onus of responsibility from the individual.

At the macro level another criticism, from which the inequalities, or social justice, perspective of resilience research has transpired, is its failure to address the structural inequalities that exist within some of the populations for which it endorses better life outcomes for. This social justice approach may best be conceptualised using an "inequalities imagination" (Hart et al., 2007) – imagining how it may be to live the experience. A recent educational policy released by the Department for Education ((DfE) 2016) acknowledges the need for a social justice approach, holding in mind the most disadvantaged and what can be done to confront these inequalities. It suggests doing so through fairer allocation of resources to the most disadvantaged groups, along with those with additional needs (DfE, 2016). This is discussed further in Chapter Ten, considering a distributive justice view of resources. This will obviously take time and has not happened entirely to date. The Department of Health ((DoH) 2015) recently predicted any shift in funding allocations for children with additional needs will not occur before 2020. However, the government has made funding available earlier than this, through Opportunity Area Funds, such as those allocated to the economically and socially challenged area of Blackpool in the UK (DfE, 2017b; BoingBoing 2018b). The outcomes of which will be transparent once the funds have been initiated and evaluated between 2017 and 2020.

The work of Hart and colleagues with university and community partners has pioneered taking an inequalities approach and continues to expand the field (BoingBoing, 2014). The umbrella social enterprise organisation that this collective of people contribute to is known as BoingBoing and is based in Brighton and Blackpool in the UK, along with international collaborators further afield. This collective of people is viewed as "…a learning community of researchers, practitioners, students, parent carers and young people who share a passion to tackle the problems that affect the most under-resourced children and families" (Hart & Aumann, 2017, p.3). Over the course of this research being completed, I have become part of this collective, as has Eleanor Smith School itself. It should be noted that one of the supervisors of this work is part of this collective and an originator of Resilient Therapy. Chapter Three refers to her openness to consider potential limitations and future opportunities for this approach. How I dealt with ensuring challenge and transparency during the course of this research is explained in Chapter Nine.

This approach involves resilience researchers collaborating with those living in disadvantaged contexts, attempting to shape research that reflects lived experiences; experiences that some of these researchers may have had themselves. We suggest using this to actively challenge and change systems that may exacerbate this disadvantage. As inequalities researchers Wilkinson and Pickett (2018 p.xxiii) state "Inequality may be entrenched…but its current levels are neither inevitable nor irreversible". Resilience research needs to focus on those disadvantaged by inequalities as a targeted interest group. Our collective pose that it is not only the responsibility, but also the obligation, of resilience researchers, with the knowledge they have, to advocate for structural and systemic change (Diprose, 2014). This resonates with me, given the knowledge I had and am developing further over time, having an insight into the inequalities pupils with complex needs face. Based upon the findings of this research presented in Chapter Nine, I offer a challenge to educational policy makers, presented in detail in Chapter Ten.

As Hart et al. (2016, p.5) write "In discourse around public health and health policy the relationship between resilience and inequalities lies at the centre of antagonistic debate between government policy and critics motivated by social justice concerns". Without these macro systems changing, as the policy discourse section has demonstrated, it is highly probable that the same poor outcomes for children with complex needs will be repeated year upon year, as DfE data highlights (2011, 2014, 2017). Resilience research needs to take heed of these criticisms if it is to have any hope of addressing the complexities of those it has the potential to support. The challenges presented to resilience research by Diprose and Hart and colleagues interrelates closely to another political critique of resilience research – the influence of the neoliberal political agenda.

The Influence of the Neoliberal Policy Discourse

Some view resilience research outcomes being used to 'make do' politically and economically with the status quo, regardless of disadvantage or need (Garrett, 2016). This is due to neoliberal politics focusing on the agency an individual has to improve or work upon the system they live within (Garrett, 2016). Neoliberalism is associated with governments taking a 'hands off' approach and emphasising the logic of the private sector, along with individual initiative to occur (Joseph, 2013). This means that for children living in deprived contexts, a government attitude of fiscal austerity is not likely to alter the economic status for them; it may actually reinforce the current state for them further, or, indeed, exacerbate it.

Ecologically based research within the fourth wave has shown that individuals influence their context and vice versa. However, children are especially powerless to be able to do so. Bottrell (2013) terms the onus being on the individual to make the best of their circumstances 'responsibilisation', with Hart et al. (2016, p.3) writing that "Responsibilisation of individuals occurs when structural accountability is denied and health inequalities come to be understood as the result of individual choices and internal capacities in line with government explanations for the production of health disparities". Current political criticisms of resilience assert that the research field has been complicit with, or is at least being used by, governments to shift the onus of responsibility for change from macro systems onto the individual. This research has the potential to challenge some of these systems from the perspective of those living within them, as further discussed in Chapter Ten.

In her article "Resilience is Futile", Diprose (2014, p.49) agrees with Bottrell (2013), writing "Resilience policies represent a failure of political will to offer substantive change for marginalised communities". The marginalised are expected to empower themselves, regardless of context, and to rise up and be resilient citizens. This may be somewhat difficult for a child with complex needs to do. The fourth wave approach used in this research may educate those with political power to see the bi-directional interplay of individuals and systems in order to develop resilience. Hart et al. (2016, p.3) support Diprose and Bottrell, asserting that resilience research has become twinned with individuals taking responsibility for themselves. They go on to assert "…social policy tends to be very different to contemporary contextualised ecological approaches to resilience" (Hart et al., 2016 p.4).

Sharing the lived experiences of children living in deprivation, such as those included in this research, may serve to make this less ignorable (Mertens, 2016). Diprose (2014) contends that resilience research is being used by neoliberal politicians to maintain the status quo; business as usual, and "…is deployed as an inducement to putting up with precarity and inequality and accepting the deferral of demands for change, and as a means of relocating responsibility" (Diprose, 2014, p.45). Bottrell (2013, p.1) concurs, writing "[there are] discrepancies in terms of how resilience is framed in social policy and how its meaning has emerged as very different from the contextualised ecological systems approach". This research may serve to challenge educational policy, at the very least, agitating for whole school approaches to be taken that recognise pupils holistically.

The challenge for resilience researchers, as Diprose (2014) sees it, is that if they continue to use traditional forms of non-collaborative methodologies, they are falling short of contributing the knowledge and understanding their research has the potential to offer. As Diprose (2014, p.51) asserts that "Personifying inequality in this manner hides historically embedded structures". Bottrell (2013) supports Diprose (2014, p.51), stating that her "relocation of the individual" maintains individuals taking responsibility for themselves, with no acknowledgement of the systemic and structural contributions outer layers of their ecologies may have upon their lived experiences. As Bartley contends (in Friedli, 2009, p.22) "…what would that resilient child have been able to do, and to contribute to the community and the economy, if he or she had never had to overcome disadvantage?'" Resilience research has the potential to illuminate threats posed to children living in such contexts and to offer co-produced solutions to these that can inform decision makers at the macro level. Chapter Ten highlights implications from this work that address such considerations.

In her report, Friedli (2009) writes that those studying mental health and resilience in communities should be "recognising the power of forces beyond individual control" (p.23). Prilleltensky and Fox (2007) reinforce Friedli's point, and they encourage activists, such as resilience researchers *have the potential to be*, to contribute to social change by challenging unjust institutions. There are clear limitations here, with policies that appear to be maintaining the status quo year after year, as the evidence demonstrates. The UK government itself identifies the poor outcomes for children with SEN (DfE, 2011, 2014, 2017), for example.

Bottrell (2013, p.1) challenges governments to change, rather than individuals, posing the question "How much adversity should resilient individuals endure before social arrangements rather than individuals are targeted for intervention?" This is in direct contradiction to the current neoliberal view. Resilience research has shown us the *what* and *why* of the problems; it now needs to move forward, using a fourth wave approach, to determine *how* best to tackle them, whilst keeping an inequalities imagination in mind where applicable. It has the potential to inform and change policy decisions (Garrett, 2016). Systems and structures at the macro level have been largely ineffective at addressing disadvantage successfully and need changing in order for the poor outcomes for children with complex needs to change also.

Schools are in a strong position to use resilience research to support their pupils in an ecological, multi-systemic way, to tackle the impact of these inequalities. My position is that resilience research is empirically evidenced and has the potential to offer children with complex needs some support. There are exciting opportunities for schools to support their

children, possibly in collaboration with local councils, national agencies and government departments, along with their pupils and families themselves. I present suggestions as to how this may be achieved in Chapter Ten. The importance of schools doing this has been recognised in the educational and social policies outlined, under the partnership working discourse (e.g. DoH, 2015). As a challenge to schools to tackle inequalities, Bryson and Crossley (2015, p.6) quote Gorard (2010) as saying "'Schools, in their structure and organisation, can do more than simply reflect the society we have; they can try to be the precursor of the kind of society that we wish to have'". The following part of this chapter reviews what has been done in schools to date and investigates any knowledge gaps that may exist for children with complex needs. Given the methodological and political criticisms being made of resilience research I was particularly keen to search for fourth wave approaches that may exist that acknowledged and worked with children experiencing inequalities.

"Mum, I've been Excluded"…Again
Resilience Development in Schools, the Knowledge Gap
At the outset of this research I conducted a literature search on resilience interventions with children with learning difficulties, special needs and/or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties using the EBSCO databases (Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) Plus with Full Text, PsycINFO), AEI, BEI, ERIC and SAGE, between 1995 and 2012 using the following key words: learning difficulties, resilience, method/s/ology, special needs, behavioural difficulty/ies, children, intervention/s. All variations in spelling of behaviour were used, along with "EBD" as another version of "ESBD". Following this, a further search was carried out using an iterative process on Google Scholar. These searches were further refined by excluding any literature not involving primary school aged children and not pertaining to the construct of resilience. However, a dearth of literature was found.

Resilience research does exist, however, largely in the mainstream school arena. In their review of school based resilience interventions with young people aged 12 to 18, Hart and Heaver (2013) found 84 published articles between 2000 and 2011 that matched their literature search criteria; resilience interventions that were based on an academically accepted definition of the construct, conducted, at least in part, in schools in an environment of disadvantage, along with a measure of resilience being used to determine the outcomes. The purpose of their review was to ascertain, according to the demands of parents and practitioners, what does or does not work currently with young people in a context of disadvantage in schools.

Of the 84 articles, 12 were selected that were deemed by the authors as best placed to answer the demands of parents and practitioners. As previously mentioned, having only identified six that included young people who had learning difficulties in the studies in their review (out of a total of 3,200), Hart and Heaver (2013, p.15) support the assertion that children with complex needs are often left out of such research, writing "And yet, resilience-focused interventions often exclude the very people who might need them the most". Considering the poor outcomes and life prognoses discussed earlier, this is disappointing. Resilience research has the potential to support children who have complex needs and to positively influence their life outcomes (see Chapter Nine).

There are two commonly used resilience supporting programmes in schools in the UK. These are the United Kingdom Resilience Programme ((UKRP), based upon the Penn Resilience Program) and Bounce Back (BB). Both programmes aim is to increase the ability of pupils to recover from stressful life experiences successfully. Unsurprisingly, given the methodological criticisms of resilience research discussed above, neither of these programmes are written for children with complex needs – they are targeted at 'mainstream' pupils in schools. The UKRP was introduced into nine secondary schools (along with Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and special schools), by three local authorities in Scotland in 2007. It was aimed at Year 7 pupils attending mainstream schools, with the goal of improving their emotional difficulties, rather than behavioural problems. In their evaluation of UKRP in 2010, Challen, Noden, West and Machin found that, the programme had positive short-term improvements for pupils who were entitled to free school meals (FSM), had not attained the national targets in English or maths at the end of Key Stage 2, or who had symptoms of anxiety or depression. These pupils experienced a larger measured impact of UKRP on their depression and anxiety scores.

However, the overall impact of the UKRP was limited and not sustained over time (Banerjee et al., 2016), as Hart and Heaver (2013) warned and its format is that of 'bolt-on' lessons (Hart & Coombe, 2014); criticisms of resilience research discussed earlier in this Chapter. The evaluators write "There was no measured impact of workshops on behaviour scores or life satisfaction scores" (Challen et al., 2010, p.4). The impact of the UKRP lasted for one year, with no observed impact two years later. This raises the issue of sustainability of effect – not only is this an ethical issue, whereby children need to be supported continually until skills are embedded, but it is also an economic one, where programmes need to be cost effective. Overall, in a meta-analysis of the Penn Resilience Programme, (Brunwasser, Gillham & Kim, 2009, in Challen et al., 2010, p.9) found "…very mixed results across studies". It had little impact on pupil's absence rates; a target area for improvement for children with complex needs. Interestingly, when considering the applicability of such a programme to children with complex needs, Hart and Heaver (2013, p.15) state "Young people with complex needs are often under-represented with studies such as those of the Penn Resiliency Program…specifically recruiting sub-clinical samples" - a previously discussed criticism of resilience research.

Another critique of the UKRP is its applicability to children with complex needs, because; it relies on them *attending* school (Hart & Heaver, 2013), extensive training is required of staff that schools may not be able to accommodate easily and which creates 'experts' in the field, it is costly, it hasn't been written to take account of the range of complex needs (accessible measures are needed, Hart et al., 2016) and disadvantage (the context) that pupils involved in this research have, it requires 18 discrete sessions of teaching, the authorities were self-selected and subsequently, results may have been gained that do not reflect a randomised sample. It is questionable whether these results would transfer to pupils in highly diverse UK boroughs in a context of deprivation, living with complex needs. For example, parental involvement and support that some children may not receive could have contributed towards the results. The materials may not be as accessible if English is not a family's first language.

McGrath and Noble (2011) designed the Bounce Back (BB) programme for developing wellbeing and resilience in children in Australia. The key aims of BB are to create positive, pro-social and resilient classrooms and schools, and to provide resources (again, additional 'bolt-on' lessons (Hart & Coombe, 2014)) to enable staff to help their pupils develop resilient attitudes and behaviour (McGrath & Noble, 2011). BB materials were re-formatted to suit a UK population, and it was introduced to 16 primary schools in Scotland in 2008. Mixed results were found across the schools, with 30% of classes showing a decrease in overall resilience scores. Reasons for this decrease are not accounted for by the authors. However, an overall increase of 2.25% in feelings of connectedness was reported by pupils, along with a 12.06% increase in pupils reporting more kindness to each other (Axford, Blyth & Schepens, 2010). In a personal communication with one of the authors, Noble (29th March, 2012) stated that BB applies in exactly the same manner to all children, regardless of need or context; a contention fourth wave resilience research would not support. As I have argued, and as statistics clearly illustrate, the empirical evidence and experiential knowledge bases do not support this conclusion.

The area where BB was introduced in the UK (Perth and Kinross) varies hugely from the East London borough in which is this research's context – the far smaller population is spread geographically and has remote rural towns as part of its makeup. The context of a rural village with lower class sizes and familiarity with peers contrasts starkly to growing up in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual city where population transience is the norm (see Chapter One). Again, the question is raised of how accessible such a programme is to children with complex needs, living in disadvantage, coping with psychological and communication difficulties and experiencing exclusion from their communities. The schools in this study were self-selected, so, as with the UKRP sample, results may not be representative of the UK more broadly.

One of the methods used in this evaluation was self-reporting on questionnaires – a method that pupils with complex needs find difficult to access. BB deals with 'every day set backs', for example, feeling disappointed often. This contrasts enormously with Luthar et al.'s (2000) definition of resilience that is pertinent to the children in this research with complex needs – coping with major stressors, such as children with complex needs do, as opposed to daily setbacks, significantly more difficult. The BB definition of resilience is "...the capacity of a person to address challenges and cope with times of adversity and hardship, and then return to a state of wellbeing" (McGrath & Noble, 2010 in Axford et al., 2010, p.5). This assumes that one was in a state of wellbeing to begin with, along with having an individual focus, without recognising bi-directional child-environment interactions, as fourth wave research has. It centres on the capacities an individual has, not viewing the person as part of an ecological, contextual model of resilience. It also fails to acknowledge the impact of context and multiple risk factors being confronted by children with complex needs daily (see Chapters One and Two).

Another UK based programme is that designed by Brigid Daniel and Sally Wassell (2002). Theirs is a framework for assessing children and young people's resilience in Scotland. This framework divides resilience into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. They write that the intrinsic factors are; a secure base, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, with the extrinsic factors being; one secure attachment relationship, access to wider support with extended family and/or

friends, and positive school and/or community experiences (Daniel & Wassell, 2002). This framework can be usefully applied as a guide for practitioners when assessing children's resilience. This approach acknowledges a second wave view of processes occurring in an ecology but does not, however, acknowledge a context of severe disadvantage and multiple and complex needs at the macro level of this ecology, a fourth wave view (see Hart & Heaver, 2015).

In a setting similar to the school this research is situated in, Natalie Hart (2012) applied resilience research to exploring what works for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Suffolk, UK. She used picture sheets and scaling to gather data, acknowledging that when working with children with special needs, communication needs to be viewed flexibly and imaginatively to circumvent problems with memory, emotion, social skills and the understanding and expression of language. Hart (2012) wanted to determine what protective resilience factors teachers supported that made the difference for pupils in their PRU. By accessing pupils' and staff views directly, she was able to make recommendations to mainstream schools about their practice, which are entirely relevant to the special school context also. Hart (2012) and Banerjee et al. (2016) recommend that schools have a duty to work with a strengths-based model - so many of their pupils have previously been victims of a deficit model that has told them repeatedly that they are the problem. The application of Hart's (2012) findings within a special needs setting to mainstream settings is relevant to my work, as discussed in Chapters Nine and Ten.

While Hart's (2012) sample is the closest to the one of interest in this research, it could be questioned how closely her sample mirrors that of a borough with high levels of deprivation and diversity. Given the size and location of her sample it is doubtful that there would have been many Muslim pupils in her sample, and probable that most of them speak English as their first language. Her sample is not taken from a context of disadvantage where the children with complex needs experience as many issues as those in this research.

During the time of writing this thesis up, a theme that arose from the qualitative data generated by staff was that a different measure of pupils' social and emotional progress was needed in order to address pupils' complex needs more satisfactorily. Such a tool was considered by the school to have the potential to complement and reinforce use of the RF. The school researched the Thrive approach (Thrive, 2015) and began using this in 2014 (see Chapter Nine). I am a trained Thrive practitioner, and so have experiential knowledge of its application. It is a fourth wave approach (Hart & Heaver, 2015). Whilst Hart and Heaver rate this approach quite highly as a multi-systemic approach, it does not reach beyond a child's exosystem - drawing up interventions for agencies to use to support pupils. It doesn't have the capacity to challenge at the macrosystemic (political and global) level. It supports individual children and their families, in their contexts, and so touches upon resilience building strategies. Training and licensing are costly, and like criticisms of other resilience building approaches in schools, creates "expert" practitioners. Again, if trained staff left the school, their knowledge and legacy may not be sustained, a frequent criticism of whole school approaches (Hart & Heaver, 2013; Hart & Coombe, 2014). Thrive does not challenge the structural inequalities that children face either, it supports them within it. The school ultimately adopted both the RF (see Appendix One) and Thrive to complement each other

for the support and development of pupils, as discussed further in Chapter Nine. Prior to the introduction of Thrive into the school, I had already searched in the literature for what existed that could be used to support children with complex needs, to develop resilience, in a context of disadvantage.

Contributing a Fourth Wave Approach for Children with Complex Needs, Living in a Context of Deprivation

The school-based programmes evaluated in this literature review are based on resilience approaches being used; they are strengths based and some of them consider the internal and external factors supporting resilience in children. However, none of them recognise a context of diversity, along with the challenges living in disadvantage may have on children with complex needs. These programmes focus on the individual child, as opposed to also considering the possible impact their surrounding ecologies may have upon them. They are based more upon first (UKRP, individuals' thought processes) and second wave approaches (BB, and Daniel & Wassell's framework for assessment, environmental and family factors) (Hart & Heaver, 2015).

I was interested in exploring a fourth wave approach, investigating what mechanisms were at work for children with complex needs, in an ecology of disadvantage. As the research progressed, it developed from being a fourth wave investigation of what mechanisms support, or act as barriers to, resilience development in children with complex needs, and began to acknowledge the impact of inequalities on them. I started to consider how this research may use an inequalities imagination to challenge the outlined criticisms. Figure 3.2 demonstrates the gap in the resilience research field and where this thesis intended to contribute original knowledge. It illustrates that as complexity increases, more input and at varied levels of the ecosystem are needed to support resilience. I posit that children with complex needs are more likely to be resilient when their needs are addressed at every level of their ecology (see Figure 3.2).
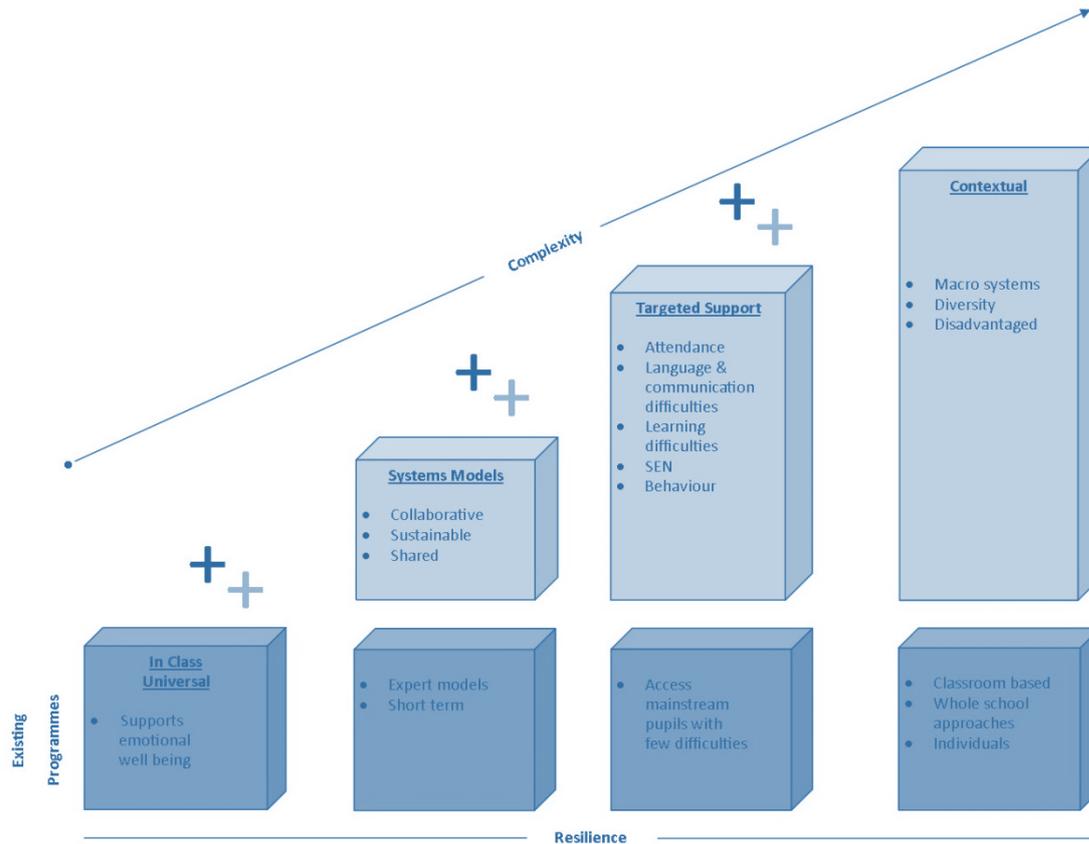
Figure 3.2: Resilience Research Gaps for Children with Complex Needs

The Resilience Framework

As mentioned, the search for whole school-based resilience-building approaches led to my exploring other possibilities that may be relevant to children with complex needs. In their text on working with children with complex needs, Aumann and Hart (2009, p.17) write "…there are children living with few assets, limited resources and risky situations that appear hopeless to us, but who have somehow done well despite the obstacles. How has this happened?" This is a question I have been asking myself for the past twenty years. Despite living in a context of disadvantage and low well-being, some children are able to succeed. Of interest to me was how they do so, and how schools can generalise this learning so that others may achieve the same outcomes (see Chapters Nine and Ten). Aumann and Hart (2009) argue that a Resilience Framework (Hart et al., 2007), formulated on the research evidence base, experiential and practice knowledge can be useful when working with children with complex needs (see Chapter One). Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts and Peereboom (2016) advocate schools using approaches to support resilience in schools that are based on strong evidence. Hart et al. (2007) developed this approach, called Resilient Therapy, which includes the Resilient Framework. Prior to this work commencing the RF had been used by Aumann and Hart (2009) with children with complex needs, although not in a school setting.

According to Hart et al. (2007), Resilient Therapy and its Framework is a strategic methodology because it uses a number of different therapeutic interventions in one coherent package. The RF offers a common language for everyone accessing it (this

mechanism is identified in the data presented in Chapter Eight). It assists practitioners who feel stuck and do not know what to try next in their work with children with numerous difficulties. The aim of the Resilient Therapy is "Avoiding pathologising children, understanding how resilient mechanisms work in complex situations and building resilience (individual, family, organisational and community)" (Hart et al., 2007, p.2). It uses an ecological approach and is based on four key principles of how practitioners should address children's needs. These four principles are known as the "Noble Truths", which involve "…developing the skills of *Accepting* the precise starting point of children/families, *Conserving* any good that has occurred hitherto, *Commitment* to working with them over a sensible time period and thoughtfully *Enlisting* appropriate others to help" (Hart et al., 2007, p.2). The RF is divided into five conceptual arenas that include interventions that support the development of resilience in children. The conceptual arenas include; Basics, Belonging, Learning, Coping and Core Self. Evidenced based strategies sit within each arena that involve working both with children as individuals, at different temporal points and paces (Lerner, 2004), and with those who impact upon their lives personally and professionally, a fourth wave approach.

In my view, a key strength of the Resilient Therapy approach is its mantra, "…there is *always something* that can be done to make things better for disadvantaged children" (Hart et al., 2007, p.4, emphasis in original). Such an approach would address the difficulty of collaborative, inter-agency work previously raised (Mental Health Taskforce, 2016), such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services' (CAMHS) current response to working with non-engaging or 'unwilling' families, of 'no further action' (DoH, 2015). In 2017, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) stated that one in five children referred to CAMHS were rejected for mental health support (NSPCC, 2017). For further discussion from this work that relates to this challenge, refer to Chapters Nine and Ten.

Applying the RF is based on strengths, on starting where a child is. It also provides families and professionals alike with strategies to try with children that are known to be effective. This contrasts hugely with the policies discussed earlier, whereby all too often, professionals fail to engage, to commit to working with, or to invoke positive change for children with complex needs. It also addresses the severity of disadvantage that some children may face – in the basics arena, it highlights the importance of addressing children's fundamental needs, such as food and transportation. Hart and Heaver (2013 p.9) write "Addressing basic inequalities and lack of access to developmentally-appropriate resources has been authoritatively described as the single most important step in improving outcomes for mental health". Schools are in a position to address some of these needs (PHE, 2015), and may be, as Bryan (2005, p.220) labels them, "…islands of hope".

Such a framework is relevant to children in a special school context also, as it acknowledges lived experiences in their contexts, while still building on strengths and assets. The RF is pragmatic and acknowledges Hart and Heaver's (2013 p27) assertion that "There is a huge gap between what research often reports, and what people want to know and learn about when working in the messy complexity of situated practice". The RF attempts to address this complexity by using a holistic model that acknowledges the myriad of issues faced by children with complex needs, putting forward strategies that are known to be effective.

According to Hart et al. (2007), Resilient Therapy and its Framework were developed to address a knowledge and practice gap when working from a holistic resilience-based perspective with children with complex needs. They concur with my findings from the literature search for this thesis, stating "…most [programmes] offer ideas, programmes and activities that are designed for work with *all* children. Only a handful of publications concentrate on the most disadvantaged in our society" (Hart et al., 2007, p.1). It was of interest to me whether, while acknowledging the ill-defined boundaries of complex needs, the RF would be a useful tool for children experiencing such issues, coupled with a context of deprivation and diversity.

An argument for researching use of the RF with children with complex needs is its valuing of human development in multiple spheres. This argument is made clearly in Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1994) ecological model, along with Rutter's (1993) contention that mechanisms and their complex interplay need to be identified. This is important to pupils with complex needs because *their* successes and achievements may be different to those of 'mainstream' children (Bottrell, 2009). What is an accomplishment for a child with complex needs, such as attending school regularly (upon which a myriad of personal, economic and social issues could be impacting), may not be an achievement for children without such difficulties (see Chapter Ten). In their papers on the relevance of resilience to individuals with learning difficulties, Miller (1996) and Bottrell (2013) state that a typical outcome measure of resilience in pupils is academic performance or achievement. Subsequently, if children are not successful academically, they may be viewed as non-resilient (see Chapter Ten). Such a narrow definition of resilience would mean that many children with learning difficulties cannot be classed as resilient. Both Public Health England ((PHE) 2015) and the Mental Health Task Force (2016) demand this definition includes developing children holistically; spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, in an ecological manner. The Framework also calls attention to employing strategies that may address experiences of discrimination or prejudice for children with complex needs in schools, as introduced in Chapter Two (see Appendix One).

Limitations of the RF need to be considered also. In a personal communication (29th November, 2012) with one of the authors, Professor Angie Hart acknowledged that, due to the paucity of research that has been completed with children with complex needs to date, the framework has been largely developed on the 'mainstream' child knowledge base. However, it has been informed by practitioner and experiential knowledge, and the resilience literature base (Hart et al., 2007). At the outset of this research the RF had also not yet been trialled or evaluated in mainstream or special school settings (Hart, personal communication 29th November, 2012). As Hart and Heaver (2013, p.15) write "[Resilience] Studies are usually conducted in 'mainstream' schools…with few marginalised young people taking part, who already have fewer chances and greater need for intervention".

Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2005 in Hart & Heaver, 2013, p.9) concluded that evaluated interventions for pupils with complex needs in schools are sparse and that "Inequality…directly impacts on psychological and physical health, to a degree that cannot simply be ameliorated by psychological interventions". It was also not clear how the RF would apply to children living in a large cosmopolitan city, where people with multiple ethnicities live side by side, a vast array of languages are spoken, mixed religious beliefs are

evident daily, and they may have to interpret adult conversations for their parents who are unable to speak English (see Chapter Nine for the discussion of findings). An opportunity to research the application of the RF for disadvantaged children with complex needs existed. This led me to considering what does 'being resilient' look like for a child with complex needs, and what can schools do maximise the likelihood of this occurring. However, before the story of how my research developed from this starting point is shared, an understanding of how such knowledge can be accessed, interpreted and represented as accurately as possible is needed. This is discussed in Chapter Four, "Voices, Participation and Collaboration"; the ontology, epistemology and methodology of this thesis.

Summary

This Chapter has outlined the developing context of resilience over time and has investigated definitions that may apply specifically to children with complex needs. An ecological-resilience view of these children's contexts would be helpful for understanding and supporting children and their families. The methodological and political criticisms of resilience research have been shared, and there is great potential for resilience research to contribute positively to supporting these children. It has failed to do so using whole school approaches to date, specifically for children with complex needs. Some approaches do exist in the UK, but there are difficulties in applying them to these children, for the various reasons explained. I was also dissatisfied with how few of them acknowledge contexts of deprivation, especially when the correlation between inequalities and life outcomes is so clear.

The Resilient Therapy approach itself, within which the Resilience Framework is situated, is open to development and applicability in broader contexts, following in the direction research findings support (e.g. Aranda, 2011; Dhanjal, 2012; Hill, 2015; Scholes & Frith, 2010). The focus of this research is on evaluating the use of resilience-based practice by educational staff and ascertaining how this may be used in the context of children with complex needs. It aims to explore whether the RF is accessible to children with complex needs, and whether it can support resilience-promoting mechanisms for them (see Chapter Nine). Some of these mechanisms may be the as-yet unacknowledged systems and structures imposed on such children and families by well meaning, but often short-sighted, political figures, both nationally and globally. It may also lead to changes being made to the framework for these children. This research has the potential to begin to challenge the systems and structures that support the status quo, and possibly to give an insight into how this could be achieved in the future. It has the capacity for co-produced knowledge to inform decision and policy making from those who live with the impacts of them (see Chapter Ten) - possibly shifting the RF and its application.

There was the potential to use a fourth wave resilience research approach, while also recognising the impact of experiencing inequalities, coupled with addressing the failure of resilience research to include children with complex needs (see Chapters Four and Five). The story of how this small-scale, local research has informed a now nationally used approach (Academic Resilience) is outlined in Chapter Ten. First an outline of how the research was conducted is necessary. Chapter Four demonstrates how a critical realist framework was used to investigate the research questions using methods that are collaborative and accessible, whilst addressing some of the methodological and political criticisms outlined in this Chapter. This research has made an empirical contribution to the inequalities and

resilience knowledge bases by using inclusive methods, asking for, and attempting to understand the experiences of children living with complex needs, along with collaborating with staff (see Chapter Nine).

Part 2

Accessing Lived Experiences

Chapter Four: Voices, Inclusion and Collaboration

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter Three, I was extremely conscious of the necessity of using a participatory methodology in this research. My view was based on the underwhelming impact of government policies addressing children with complex needs (see Chapter Two), along with criticisms, within our Centre of Resilience for Social Justice at the University of Brighton, of resilience research overlooking their inclusion in investigations. By the very nature of their difficulties, pupils with complex needs are unlikely to sit and complete traditional forms of measurement or assessment. The ethos at Eleanor Smith School is one of collaboration and on-going learning (see Chapter One), so it was important to me that I involved staff and pupils as collaborators. Using this approach, I felt that I would be able to get as representative a view of their experiences and practice ideas as possible. Consequently, I embarked upon an action research approach to this research. I used mixed methods to glean data from as many sources as possible that would help to illuminate the facilitators of, and barriers to, resilience development in the pupils at Eleanor Smith School. My epistemological position is one whereby I view people as sharing a reality but experiencing and viewing it differentially; a critical realist perspective. Critical realism supports the use of mixed methods and participatory approaches, and this maintains my confidence in interpreting the data gained as a result. This chapter outlines the tenets of critical realism, as they relate to action research and I present how the cycle of investigation was used as staff and pupils generated the data analysed and discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine.

My Response to Research and Political Criticisms

To re-cap, the aim of this research is to explore which resilience mechanisms facilitate, or act as barriers to, supporting resilience in children with complex needs, in a special school context. The research questions are:

1. Does using resilience-based practice support children with complex needs to achieve positive outcomes?

2. What are the mechanisms facilitating these outcomes?

3. What mechanisms act as barriers to embedding resilience-based practice?

My ontology and epistemology have been shaped by my initial university training as a psychologist, which was very much quantitatively based. The focus was on measurement and testing, influenced directly by a positivist paradigm. Since graduating from university and working professionally as a statutory social worker, registered psychologist and teacher, I am acutely aware of the diversity of contexts and world views people have. These views people hold have been shaped by the systems and structures around them, along with their own interpretations and experiences of these contexts. My positivist background in psychology was further shaped by my experiences and understanding of myself and others, developing into a more ecologically based view, with an inequalities imagination (see Chapters One and Three). I now view human experience as being shaped by the bi-directional impact people have on their contexts, as active agents within this, and

concurrently, the impact their contexts have upon them. Given the critiques of resilience research presented in Chapter Three, alongside the minimal impact government policies have had on outcomes for children with complex needs, I felt that a participatory approach that magnifies the lived experiences of children was essential to this research.

I adhere to Lusard's (in Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon & Chandler, 2002 p389) contention that "Key to meaning making in qualitative work is an awareness of one's own worldview and perspectives while in dialogue with persons in their natural setting". van Heugten (2004, p.204) furthers this, writing that "Researchers' inclinations and limitations influence the way they conceptualize and approach research problems". I needed to be mindful, as a white female from New Zealand, of how I could best interpret and understand the lived experience of a seven year old immigrant from Ghana. It was important for me to remember that my knowledge is fallible and open to interpretation, and consequently, it needed to be checked with collaborators to confidently portray an accurate account (see Chapters Five and Six).

Conversely, I give credence to the usefulness of quantitative measures of human views and experiences, especially when measuring change over time. Each approach has its strengths and its limitations discussed in Chapter Five. A critical realist approach supports the use of mixed methods where appropriate, to answer the research questions. This Chapter, however, focuses on critical realism as a theoretical framework, comparing it to other approaches, and discussing what it has to offer children with complex needs, arguing for transformation and empowerment, and using a collaborative action research design as the methodology for doing so. The supporting methods used are discussed in Chapter Five. A critical realist philosophy of knowledge supports my ontological views and provides confidence through the complementary, participatory approach of action research; the links between which are discussed in the following sections of this Chapter.

Conceptualising Knowledge

My epistemology is directly informed by my ontology and vice versa. In his text on social research foundations, Michael Crotty (1998, p.3) defines epistemology as, "…the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology". Realist theorists, Benton and Craib (2011) and Marks (2002) define epistemology as developing criteria that are able to justify the knowledge claims made, thus separating them from mere belief, prejudice or faith. When embarking on this research I needed to consider how my views of reality have been shaped, how this has come to be, and how I frame how I know what I know – my ontological and epistemological claims. I needed to be reflexive and consider asking children with complex needs "What's it like to be you?" I have never had learning difficulties or special educational needs. I have never lived in poverty or been exposed to domestic violence. I can only imagine how this feels for a vulnerable child with few social resources; and at the same time, I also need to remember that feelings and experiences for children are not necessarily shared universally. In the development of their Resilience Framework ((RF), see Appendix One), used in this research, and Hart, Blincow and Thomas (2007, p.6) refer to this quality as having an "inequalities imagination" (see Chapter Three). My inequalities imagination has been shaped by my professional experience. Because I am unable to know how reality *is* for the children in this research, I needed to

seek as much pertinent information directly from them as possible and to make meaning from this; the aim being to represent a shared understanding (see Chapters Eight and Nine).

I come from the standpoint that people are social beings who share an external reality. However, human experiences are viewed and felt differentially, with external structures exerting power over these experiences, along with individuals' perceptions and attempts to shape and change these. This led to me considering a critical realist theoretical framework to support my philosophical stance. As will be demonstrated, a critical realist position supports the view that people hold some ability to shape their experiences and consequently, to transform their worlds in some way. This view is particularly appealing to me as a researcher; especially so given the inequalities pupils at Eleanor Smith School experience (see Chapter Two), along with having the potential to improve outcomes for them collaboratively.

I also recognised the need to access information from various sources, and in different ways to validate the data gained as far as possible. How I did this is outlined in Chapters Five and Six. In this context, I could not form an understanding of pupils' lived experiences and views, without asking them in a manner appropriate to their needs, preferably using mixed methods within a participatory approach. My preference for such methods has been shaped historically by dissatisfaction with working as a psychologist, assessing children, writing reports and leaving their lives without really knowing them – working 'at' them and not 'with' them (Farthing, 2016; Chapter Three). This role was constrained within a model used by the team when I worked in New Zealand, which had little room for creativity or getting to know children's worlds. I felt professional and personal dissatisfaction with such an approach and this contributed to my determination to work differently in the future (see Chapter One). Mertens (2013) writes of a similar dissatisfaction with prevailing paradigms at the time, leading to her transformative philosophy of research developing. Before beginning this research, I was unaware of this stance, and it appealed to me, given my own perceptions and experiences.

My ontology and epistemology are framed by a critical realist philosophy because I wish to explain phenomena and I believe to do so effectively in this context would require accessing experience in the first person. I wanted to know from pupils and staff what is working for, or against resilience development at Eleanor Smith School. I also believe that there is a shared external reality that people hold in this context, but that it is experienced and interpreted differentially. A critical realist approach supports the aims of this research because a), I believe that we can know a real world, but also b) that this real world is interpreted differently by individuals and we cannot assume that how it is for one, will be perceived the same by another; akin to Lerner's (2004) view of human plasticity overviewed in Chapter Three.

Critical realism views humans as being able to exercise personal agency over their external worlds and structures. This allows that my views may be entirely different from a colleague's, despite us sharing the same experiences. Marks (2002 p10) writes that critical realism views the world as an open system where "…a multiplicity of mechanisms are operating simultaneously and affecting each other", a view supported by the ecological model referred to in Chapter Three. There is the potential for open ended structures to

change or be changed. This philosophy instils hope in me as a researcher that social transformation may be achieved for children with the typically poor outcomes discussed in Chapter Two, as a result of their and others' input. I anticipated that an action research methodology would support this transformation in the form of staff practice changes (see Chapter Nine). Before I discuss the strengths of this approach, I outline the tenets of critical realism that relate directly to my methodology and will illustrate how they each complement one another.

Critical Realism: The Principles behind Conceptualising Knowledge from Lived Experiences

In their overview of social theories Brannick and Coghlan (2007) outline four key debates that are central to rival theoretical claims. These are; the agency-structure debate, the constructionist-positivist debate, the local-global debate and the individualism-collectivism debate. They state that there is no consensus as to what counts as valid or worthwhile data and the differing responses to these debates constitute different epistemologies (Benton & Craib, 2011). Considering this, a researcher must be able to justify the methodology used and the influences they bring to their research that may have an impact on the data generated and interpreted. When challenged with the question "How do you know your data is an accurate reflection of participants' voices?" I need to be able to make my epistemological position clear as a researcher.

In 1978 Roy Bhaskar first introduced critical realism as a philosophy of social science within the empiricist world of science in his book '*A Realist Philosophy of Science*'. Subsequently, in 1979, he extended the philosophy to the social sciences in '*The Possibility of Naturalism'*. Yeung (1997, p.52, emphasis in the original) defines critical realism as "…a scientific *Philosophy* that celebrates the existence of reality independent of human consciousness (realist ontology), ascribes causal powers to human reasons and structures (realist ontology), rejects relativism in social and scientific discourses (realist epistemology) and reorientates [sic] the social sciences towards its emancipatory goals (realist epistemology)". Realist theorists Brannick and Coghlan (2007) go on to summarise critical realism as having an objectivist view of ontology which assumes that social and natural reality exist independently of human cognition, along with a subjectivist epistemology that denies the possibility of theory-neutral language (Scott, 2010). It is also interested in particular knowledge, with the role of the researcher being close to the research, as in this work. Benton and Craib (2011) describe critical realism as maintaining a realist view, while accounting for natural sciences in an anti-positivist tradition. They further this, writing that realists agree that a real world exists, which is independent of human knowledge or belief (Benton and Craib, 2011). However, they hold that this external world is in principle knowable and to some extent, open to being changed through research and investigation, dependent on the data resulting from it (Benton & Craib, 2011).

McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.69) support this, asserting that critical realism is a philosophical alternative to positivism or interpretivism, which are founded on necessary truths about the nature of how the world is. They say that critical realists maintain that change and progress are possible because of the enduring nature of structures and processes, and that research is then able to test hypotheses against these, as a point of reference (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). They go on to state that, from a critical realist

perspective, human perceptions are shaped by our theories and research interests, never allowing researchers to fully apprehend reality. This influences methodological choices and decisions, as Scott (2010, p.11) writes in his text on educational research within a critical realist framework "Since the researcher, by definition, engages with the world and provides a description of it, then philosophical issues, even if they are not explicitly acknowledged, underpin the methodological decisions that are made". I am aware that my methodological choices have been influenced strongly by my preferred working style, both with pupils and staff. I do not see myself as an expert, but I enjoy working with others, and my inequalities imagination (sometimes *indignation*) drove me to taking a participatory, action and practice-based approach to this work. Given the acknowledgement of my almost predetermined choice of methodology, it is important for me to recognise other theoretical frameworks to justify that my choices are informed and appropriate. The following section provides a brief overview of these; positivism and interpretivism.

Why Critical Realism and Not Other Approaches?

Two competing theoretical frameworks exist that critical realism actively challenges. These are the positivist and constructionist (interpretivist) paradigms. Positivism relies on what can be observed and directly measured, usually in artificial experimental conditions. Conversely, constructionism relies on participant's views and social constructions of reality. They are situated at opposite poles ontologically and epistemologically; critical realism challenges these two frameworks' assumptions. McEvoy and Richards (2006) provide a clear example of one such criticism, asserting that there are two problems with positivist methodologies; they focus only on the observable, and elements of social systems are dealt with separately, using quantitative measures of this. Conversely, critical realists feel dissatisfied with interpretivist methodologies because they do not relate social structures that underlie the discourses of individuals, which enable or disable actions, using qualitative measures therein (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). In my view, a theoretical framework is most useful when it informs practice through lived and contextual experiences, along with parallel measures of our shared realities. This supports the use of mixed methods to measure mechanisms that may be impacting on facilitators or barriers to resilience development (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight)

In their defence of critical realism as a theoretical approach, McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.70) write that critical realists give credibility to the value of interpretivist methodologies that focus on human values, interpretations and discourses, as that same reasoning can act as the causal explanation of phenomena. Clark, MacIntyre and Cruikshank (2007) also compare constructionist approaches to research with that of critical realism. They question the constructionist position that there is not a shared independent reality, when in health disciplines, for example, pathogens and injuries occur outside of the realm of an individual's "…beliefs, hopes and perceptions" (Clark et al., 2007, p.519). Their assertion supports my view of having a shared reality, regardless of whether this is experienced or not, that people make differing meanings, and have varying experiences of reality.

Critical realism offers a bridge between positivism and constructionism – valuing the strengths of both approaches in highlighting the generative mechanisms that contribute to experiences of reality – marrying external structures and human agency as each having the potential to impact upon the other. Attempting to uncover generative mechanisms supports

my research questions, exploring possible facilitators of, and barriers to resilience development. This is evident in critical realism's embracing of the use of mixed methods, for example, to answer research questions. Mechanisms that may not be illuminated by quantitative measures (see Chapter Seven) could potentially come to light via qualitative methods (see Chapter Eight), and vice versa. Clark et al. (2007) encapsulate the differences between positivist, hermeneutic (constructionist) and critical realist approaches toward explaining the powers of health changing programmes (Clark et al., 2007, pp.520 – 521). The posits of each framework are presented in Table 4.1, below.

	Positivist	**Hermeneutic (Constructionist)**	**Critical Realism**
Ontology	Under theorised	No universal truths	Stratified – difference between experiences, events/outcomes, structures that exert influence over outcomes
Causality	Successionist	Discourse based	Generative
Measurement	Observable outcomes	Experiences of interventions	Explains variations in outcomes using observable outcomes and social determinants
Agency	Personal risk factors	Individual agency considered over contextual factors	Agency can instigate change but is constrained by this agency
Structure	Power of the programmes. Contends that contextual factors are controlled for	Agency weighted over structural factors that determine programme outcomes	Programmes and contexts both support and constrain agency
Emancipation	Programmes have power to influence individuals	Individuals react to experiences of programmes – limited capacity of programme and context to influence change	Individuals have power to change behaviours but only when mechanisms are activated at certain times and in certain contexts
Strengths	Knowledge generated for specific demographic groups	Personal beliefs and meanings have an impact on change, as can social and cultural discourses present	Outcomes determined by complex interactions between agency and structures. Knowledge generated about why what works, when and for whom
Weaknesses	Context and individual factors not recognised as influential on outcomes	Does not recognise objective reality of outside causal agents e.g. disease, context or structural forces	How can the existence and power of mechanisms be captured by research? With hugely varying contexts, how can effective programmes be adapted to suit this?

Table 4.1: Clark, McIntyre and Cruikshank's (2007) table summarised, comparing three theoretical frameworks' approaches to understanding health programme's effectiveness

The following concepts within a critical realist framework that are pertinent to action research and address some of the criticisms of positivist and constructionist approaches are discussed further in the following section. These are, namely; stratified reality, generating mechanisms, explaining causal phenomena within programmes using abstraction and

retroduction, social transformation, and the power dynamics of agency within open systems.

The Tenets of Critical Realism that Support the Research Methodology

Interpreting Layers of Reality to Generate Mechanisms and Understand Causal Phenomena

From a critical realist perspective, ontology is divided into three levels of reality, the contention being that reality is stratified. These three levels are the real, the actual and the empirical (Houston, 2010; Scott, 2010). The real world is what science seeks to discover (mechanisms at work, their powers and tendencies). This relates to the aim of this research, uncovering mechanisms that may facilitate or act as barriers to resilience development in pupils. The actual is what can occur outside of the real, such as sequences of events, or as McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.69) describe them, "…the 'deep' structures and mechanisms that generate phenomena"; the unexperienced, but experience-able. In this special school setting, this may translate as experiences the pupils are directly exposed to during the day, such as interactions with others, the influence of rules, or interpretations they make of others' behaviour. The empirical level is observed events that occur within the actual level (empiricism). Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen and Karlsson (2002) describe these layers, stating that the empirical level of reality may be viewed as what we experience, either indirectly or directly. It is different from the actual and the real domains, whereby events happen, regardless of whether we experience them for ourselves, or when events occur that may be triggered "metaphorically" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.20) by mechanisms. In this investigation, the empirical may be evidenced as being reprimanded for not following a school rule, or the experience and associated feelings generated by participating in an after school club.

An example of research that examines context, capacities and outcomes in an attempt to explain the relationship between them is Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey and Walshe's (2005) work. They write that a realist approach to considering why interventions did or did not work is necessary because of the complexity of social (open) systems and interventions (Pawson et al., 2005). They go on to assert "It provides an explanatory analysis aimed at discerning what works for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects and how" (Pawson et al., 2005, p.S1:21) - the focus of the research questions in this thesis. Pawson (2013) states that to be able to explore contexts, mechanisms and outcomes adequately, a realist approach is essential. In parallel, I wished to identify which mechanisms of resilience were at work within the Resilience Framework ((RF) see Appendix One) to support pupils with complex needs, and if it did not do so, to determine possible reasons why not, or to identify the barriers to this; looking at the causal phenomena at work. This delineation of causal phenomena is supported by the critical realist process of abstraction.

Abstraction to Identify Mechanisms

Through a process of abstraction, critical realism is able to identify the mechanisms at work that give rise to phenomena. Yeung (1997, p.58, emphasis in the original) states that the purpose of abstraction "…is to isolate causal mechanisms (the 'real') in relation to a concrete phenomenon and to obtain knowledge of *real* structures or mechanisms which give rise to or govern the flux of *real* phenomena of social and economic life". A process of abstraction involves systematically isolating partial aspects of an object and then recombining in order to grasp the concreteness of the objects – this then allows for

identification of the relationship between phenomena and deeper causal structures that are generative mechanisms. Abstraction is completed successfully when no contradictory evidence exists and the generative mechanisms are defined enough to explain the concrete phenomena (Yeung, 1997). It can only be said to occur when the mechanism is activated under appropriate circumstances or contingencies and the phenomenon occurs, and if the phenomenon cannot be caused by any other generative mechanisms. I wished to identify facilitators of resilience in pupils and whether staff illuminate actions that generated better outcomes for them (see Chapter Nine). There are many overlaps between this framework and the ecological model which recognises the complexity of multiple spheres of human experience that interact with each other in a bi-directional nature. The ecological model of resilience discussed in Chapter Three acknowledges this complex interplay, which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

A realist approach seeks to ameliorate difficulties such as those raised by the Medical Research Council ((MRC) 2000, p.1): "Complex interventions in health care, whether therapeutic or preventative, comprise a number of separate elements which seem essential to the proper functioning of the intervention although the "active ingredient" of the intervention that is effective is difficult to specify". In their review of resilience programmes in schools, Hart and Heaver (2013, p.4) agree with the MRC (2000) that acknowledging relationships is necessary, as complex social interventions rarely fit a random control trial-type review. Houston (2010, p.89) endorses this, maintaining that critical realism allows a researcher to get into the "black box" (p89) of an intervention or programme to examine how and why interventions work, and under what circumstances they do. As Pawson (2013 p15), in his text on realist evaluations of programmes asks, "…what is it about a programme that works for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects, over what duration". I believe answering these questions is possible using a critical realism approach to explore the efficacy of the RF for children with complex needs in the context of a special school, set within a deprived London borough.

Once mechanisms have been identified, critical realists aim to activate them, in order to facilitate or improve conditions for those involved in, or targeted by, their research (Houston, 2010; see Chapter Ten). We need to understand oppressive causes to be able to explore how to dismantle them. By enquiring into and explaining events we also have an understanding of how to respond to them. In Bottrell's investigation into the social capital of young people living in disadvantage, Terrion (in Bottrell, 2009, p.478) is quoted as writing that "…the importance of institutional commitment to directing power for the emancipation of disadvantaged groups" is crucial. Emancipation of the oppressed is a core aim within a critical realist framework.

Bottrell's (2009) work found that when participants were actively involved in programme development the outcomes were more positive than when they were not. Given my inequalities imagination (or indignation), the idea of research having the potential to be emancipatory particularly appealed to me. My research had the goal of identifying what mechanisms work now and what could work more advantageously in using the RF for children with complex needs, living in a context of economic oppression. Using an action research methodology (discussed below), including and collaborating with those the research questions directly effect, the research outcomes have more potential to be

accurately informed. The prospect of this research to be emancipatory for these children was exciting, having the potential to transform how staff worked with them, based on reports of their experiences at school.

McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.69) elucidate the ultimate goal of a critical realist approach as identifying deeper levels of explanation and understanding, uncovering mechanisms at work (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). This is different from identifying generalisable laws as a positivist approach would, or identifying the lived experience or beliefs of people, as interpretivists do. Pawson and Tilley (2004) agree, asserting that the key drive behind critical realism is to identify what works for whom, when and how. Critical realism allows for "...programmes [to] be enacted under favourable circumstances, in suitable contexts and by capable providers" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997 in Clark et al., 2007, p.525). The approach does so through its stratified ontology which contends that outcomes are causally linked to events that are only activated under specific circumstances (Clark et al., 2007). To be able to determine the generative mechanisms that underlie and contribute to such complexity, critical realists use a process known as retroduction; investigating generative causes.

Retroduction to Improve Outcomes

Benton and Craib (2011) state that one of the motivations behind critical realism is to look beyond surface appearances of things to discover the causes that generate them - retroduction. This is key to this work, wishing to understand what may be acting in combination behind the surface presentation of observable events. Failing to do this is a criticism of a positivist approach, where only the observable is recordable or noteworthy. Danermark et al (2002, p.206) define retroduction as "A thought operation involving a reconstruction of the basic conditions for anything to be what it is…it is by reasoning we can obtain knowledge of what properties are required for a phenomenon to exist". Critical realism contends that causality may flow up or down this hierarchy and that mechanisms from different levels may combine variously. This is similar to the stand point of an ecological model of resilience (see Chapter Three), whereby different layers can have an impact to varying degrees, depending on the context and the individual. This relationship is outlined in more detail later in the next section and how retroduction was used to come to the findings is presented in Chapter Nine.

In his review of the usefulness of critical realism to human geography research, Yeung defines retroduction: "The broader realist method in which iterative abstraction is embedded is known as *retroduction* in which an argument 'moves from a description of some phenomenon to a description of something which produces it or is a condition for it'" (Bhaskar, 1986 in Yeung, 1997, p.59). This should move from giving pure descriptions of the phenomenon (which positivism would measure), to abstractions of possible causes or reasons. This is a useful process in this research, for example, when attempting to gain insight into what may have contributed to Alistair (see Chapter One) being excluded. Consideration needed to be given to the influence his context and experiences of the systems around him could have on his behaviour before, during and after the description of his morning. This type of consideration of human experience in individual, yet shared, contexts gives this research the licence to pursue an understanding of what mechanisms may be at work for pupils, however variously experienced.

Improving Outcomes: The Potential for Social Transformation

Key to this research is critical realism's commitment to social change. Central to the philosophy for pupils in this research is that school staff can potentially change their behaviours and the structures that impact upon them and the pupils. I wished to do so collaboratively, investigating what currently occurs, what could occur, and what could be done to ensure this happens to achieve better life outcomes for these children. Benton and Craib (2011, p.140) succinctly state that "…to make out a satisfactory argument for an emancipatory transformation of society it would be necessary to show that an alternative, and preferable…form of social life can be achieved". The statistics that indicate the typically poor predicted life outcomes for children with complex needs, illustrated in Chapter Two, reinforce the need for such a philosophy of research. A transformative paradigm, using inclusive, participatory methods, is endorsed by Mertens (2007; 2013). A positive outcome of research for children with complex needs would be social transformation of the structures that currently oppress them. Recommendations for how this could happen, based on the findings of this work are presented in Chapter Ten.

Agency within Open Systems

Another key concept in the critical realist framework is that of agency. Other theoretical approaches may view agency as meaning physical and behavioural change, thereby disregarding individuals' meanings, experiences and reactions to their contexts (Clark et al., 2007). A critical realist approach recognises that programmes exist within organisational, social and cultural contexts (complementing the ecological model's view) and that these contexts impact upon perceptions and behaviours. Clark et al.'s (2007) example of smoking cessation in disadvantaged communities resonates with this point. They contend that smoking cigarettes can be more common and socially acceptable in areas of deprivation, when compared with others (Clark et al., 2007). These structural factors impact upon behaviour and the success or otherwise of smoking cessation programmes. They go on to write that critical realism acknowledges "…the power of individual agency to instigate change but [is] also cognizant of the constrained and embedded nature of this agency" (Clark et al., 2007, p.520). Such systems within which human experience is situated, can be considered to be 'open systems'. In direct comparison, this approach also acknowledges that staff and pupils have the capacity to exert agency and positive change on systems within their specific context.

Critical realism acknowledges that society is an 'open' system (Pawson & Tilley, 2004), as opposed to the 'closed' systems studied in empirical research. Benton and Craib (2011, p.130) describe open systems as existing when "…mechanisms coexist and interact with one another in contingent ways". This complements the contentions in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (see Figure 3.1; Chapter Three), as discussed in the following section. Benton and Craib (2011) summarise the concept of agency as people being active agents who have the capacity to act upon and be impacted upon by structures around them, for example, the political system or poverty. Phenomena exist and operate in open systems (the social world), which are inherently dynamic and various contexts and mechanisms therefore have the potential to affect outcomes. These contextual factors may include geographical, historical, social, cultural, environmental and physical aspects of individuals' worlds (ecologies) (Sayer, 2000).

The pupils in this research are directly impacted by government policies. They live in a context of poverty, sometimes being exposed to high risk familial issues, such as domestic violence, or perhaps having genetic, social and psychological difficulties, to name but a few of the influences on them. Their contexts impact upon them, and they in turn impact upon their context. The social world is an open system and we need to investigate the interplay (Houston, 2010), akin to considering the bi-directional impact of individuals on their contexts and their context upon them (see Chapter Three). There are multiple causal factors operating with varying effects in different circumstances over time and space. Critical realism attempts to delineate what these causal factors are, in an effort to explain these phenomena further (retroduction), within context. How the critical realist framework supported this work to consider the ecological model and present the subsequent data (see Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine) now follows.

An Ecological View through a Critical Realist Lens

As discussed in Chapter Three, due to dissatisfaction with the positivist paradigm dominating developmental psychology in the 1970's, Bronfenbrenner introduced the idea that people needed to be studied as multi person systems that interact with their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; see Figure 3.1). Resilience research recognises that the environment has an impact on the child and reciprocally, the child has an impact upon their environment (Masten, 2001). Likewise, "Critical realism also suggests that the social world comprises of a myriad of interconnecting systems – personal, familial, institutional, to name a few – each with their own particular generative mechanisms…the best we can do…is to look for *tendencies*, not certainties" (Houston, 2010, p.75, emphasis in the original).

Lerner (2004) writes that a developmental systems (ecological) model supports the study of resilience (see Chapter Three), as this model recognises that person, place and time all interact. This bears strong resemblance to critical realism's focus on determining what works for whom, when and how (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). This thesis focuses on including staff and pupils to gain an understanding from them about how this is for them, in their lived experiences and views. Lerner (2004) also writes about plasticity and the importance of the potential for change across the lifespan. Again, a critical realist approach acknowledges the importance of recognising the impact of time and space upon outcomes. Lerner's philosophy also coincides strongly with critical realism's drive to empower the oppressed and to use theory to transform societies. Resilience research holds some promise for children with complex needs that may address current inadequacies, both within the research's foci to date, and the failing of social policies to achieve better outcomes for them. I am interested in how we may impact upon an unequal system that exacerbates difficulties for our pupils, and potentially advise policy and practice in the future through our collective data; potentially informing transformation (Mertens, 2007; 2013; see Chapter Ten).

In considering the complexity of the layers of social life from a critical realist perspective, Houston (2010, p.77) states that there are different domains. According to Layder's model (1997, in Houston, 2010), there are varying levels also; psychobiography (individuals' existence through space and time in the social world); situated activity (everyday social interactions); social settings (informal groupings such as family and formal groupings such as social institutions); and contextual resources (culture, polity and economy and the

asymmetrical resources they allocate). Houston (2010) asserts that these domains are mutually dependent on each other and related to each other as inter-linking layers over time, while still holding their own independence. Each layer has a different form of power. According to Houston (2010) power is the intermingling of individual and systemic forces that blend together to shape action (Houston, 2010). However, Houston proposes that Layder needs to include the psychology, biology, physicality and genetics of the actor in his theory. Subsequently, Houston proposes five domains; the person, situated activity, social settings, culture and economy. My interpretation of the overlap between these domains and the ecological model may appear as such:

	Bronfenbrenner	**Layder**
1.	Individual/microsystem	The person/situated activity
2.	Microsystems	Situated activity
3.	Macrosystems	Culture and economy

My research aims to investigate the multiple domains that impact on human agency and the impact that agency, in turn, may have on these systems.

Lerner's (2004) concept of plasticity is particularly pertinent to my research (see Chapter Three). He states that individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities are all plastic and that strengths can be integrated with the assets of communities to promote positive change (Lerner 2004). In his view, Lerner (2004) believes it is the role of science to work out how to optimise human development positively, in his work with adolescents, he labelled this Positive Human Development (PHD). He states that there are five key considerations that need to be thought through in order to do this:

1. what attributes of

2. what individuals in relation to

3. what contextual/ecological conditions at

4. what points in ontogenetic, family or generational, and cohort or historical time may be integrated to promote

5. what instances of positive human development?

and that only integrative models have the capacity to answer these questions (Lerner, 2004). Bronfenbrenner's ecological model offers such integration and consideration of the multi-faceted layers of individual's contexts.

Lerner (2006, p.41) argues for an ecological model stating "…the scientific study of resiliency within the developmental system is an excellent sample case of the utility of such theoretical models as frames for the elucidation of the basic, relational processes of human development and, as well, for the application of developmental science to promote positive human development". He goes on to write that the plasticity of human development, with the potential to change across the life span and its inherent diversity, are the necessary subjects of a developmental model, and not reductionist structures such as nature vs nurture (Lerner, 2006). Lerner (2006) postulates that people need to be aligned with the assets in their contexts, for example in schools, to maximise their strengths and realise their full potential; a concept akin to critical realism's social transformation. Critical realism is

open to acknowledging and attempting to understand the influence of this plasticity through concepts such as open systems and human agency.

As mentioned, the methodology used in this study is action research. An action research approach responds to the necessity of collaborative approaches being used more in resilience research in schools (see Chapter Three). The tenets of action research also correspond with my own preferences and transformational values. The complementary nature of an action research methodology supporting and inter-connecting with an ecological/contextual approach that seeks to understand mechanisms that cause phenomena (realism) is outlined in the following section.

Using Action Research and Critical Realism to Understand Mechanisms and Support Social Transformation

The action research design is based upon staff daily practice and pupils' experiences of this. In their text on educational research methods, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.297) define action research as "…the combination of action and research [rendering]…a personal attempt [being] made to understand, improve and reform practice". This philosophy underpins the aim of my research to investigate and illuminate barriers or facilitators to developing resilience within pupils with complex needs in a special school context whilst improving or reforming practice. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that by using action research, practitioners are able to "…evaluate, improve and steer decision-making and practice" scientifically (p.297), a philosophy shared with critical realism. Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002, p.171) assert that "…action research is more appropriate than traditional research for improving practice, and professional and organisational learning", due to its exploratory and inductive nature.

Referring to the aims of this work, one was to identify practice that facilitates the development of resilience in pupils, another was to identify barriers to this occurring. Both aims relate directly to the philosophy of action research, that is, to improve practice. The participatory and collaborative in situ methodology also fits within an action research approach to a scientific investigation in the social world (Cohen et al., 2007; Gray, 2004). The methods used in this research support an inductive approach to improving staff practice, by exploring what mechanisms and barriers may be at work when using the RF (Hart et al., 2007) in a school with children with complex needs.

Action research complements the philosophical underpinnings of critical realism on many levels. In her review of action research being used with practitioners, Meyer (2003, p.104) writes of a strong interlinking between critical realism and action research with respect to eight points, these being:

1. Social situations are complex and not dictated by general laws – insight or professional judgement is needed – **critical realism's open systems**
2. Knowledge is socially constructed, and researchers need to state their assumptions about what constitutes knowledge and to explore meaning with others in a reflexive and collaborative manner – **critical realism's acknowledgement of interpretivism**
3. Knowledge is fallible and incomplete and needs to be taken in context with historical (and I would argue, cultural and spiritual) influences – **stratified reality**

4. The point of research using a critical realist methodology is to bring about change – **social transformation**
5. Social activity transforms situations and so, findings should be fed back to participants to inform this transformation - **empowerment**
6. Whilst research is being conducted, ideas are being tested and worked on as a continual process - **retroduction**
7. An action research approach allows for resolving contradictions that are bound to be present when investigating objective forces and structures that underlie subjective experiences – **stratified reality**
8. Finally, "…equal voice is given to all participants and that through free, collaborative and critical exchange of ideas participants are given the opportunity to influence their future practice" – **empowerment and emancipation from oppression**

Meyer (2003, p.108) makes a strong case that for the use of action research within a critical realist epistemology, asserting "Practitioners do not want the sort of research that has been so controlled and sanitized that it no longer relates to practice. Nor do they want experts, divorced from practice, to interpret their world for them. Instead they have a right to be involved in both research and development and to have the opportunity to shape a better understanding of their everyday work". These are core principles which are fundamental to me as a researcher. I do not view myself as an expert, I wanted the outcomes of the research to apply to and inform future practice and I wanted to do this in collaboration with those that it impacts upon. Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002, p.173, emphasis in the original) argue that "*The total perceived impact* [of social science research upon management and organisational practice] is judged by what we learned in some 200 interviews in the business sector, *virtually nil*". They go on to argue that action research has two goals; one is to solve a problem, the other is to generate new knowledge or understandings (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002). This assertion supports the purpose of this work to inform daily practice on an outcomes basis, so that staff have confidence that what they are doing is working for their pupils positively and have an understanding of the mechanisms supporting this.

The key drive behind an action research methodology is to change and inform practice. Cheek (1999, p.391, emphasis in the original) argues that "Practical, specific and concrete research outcomes are needed in practice-based disciplines, but so are thoughtful practitioners who can influence and change practice. The two need not be, *and must not be*, mutually exclusive". Using an action research design answers Luthar and Brown's (2007) and Pawson's (2013) calls for an integrated model whereby the conditions under which programmes do or do not work are identified, along with the mechanisms underlying treatment effects, testing interventions in real world contexts and making tested interventions accessible and effective in community settings. The complementarity between critical realism and action research is stated clearly by Houston (2010, p.88), who writes "Action research…is a method that can embrace critical realist premises most easily as it is concerned, not only with programme evaluation, but also with emancipatory change. It can embrace the search for deep mechanisms operating at the 'real' level". He goes on to state that critical realism is a retroductive approach that integrates with the action research cycle (see Figure 6.1; Chapter Six) to produce change in social situations (Houston, 2010). Ultimately, Houston (2010) writes, once oppressive mechanisms (barriers to resilience development, in this work discussed in Chapter Nine) have been discovered, through

methods such as action research they should be challenged and changed. As action researchers, staff may be able challenge or eliminate identified barriers to resilience development in pupils.

In his text on researching the 'real world', Gray (2004, p.374) defines action research whereby research subjects are themselves involved in a democratic partnership with a researcher. This thinking appeals to me. Although I am a senior leader in the school, and have been for some time, I do not see myself as having all the answers or being an expert. Mirroring the learning community ethos of the school (see Chapter One), I felt we could all learn from each other. Research is seen as an agent of change, and data is generated from the direct experiences of the research participants. Action research fits within the critical realist epistemology of this thesis because of the theoretical framework's commitment to a belief that descriptions of the world can be both explanatory and potentially transformative of those relationships (Scott, 2010).

Critical realism acknowledges social actors operating in open systems whereby knowledge that was once assumed is thereby open to challenge and change constantly. An epistemology that recognises the complex interplay between social actors and the agency they do or do not possess in relation to the structures (see Figure 3.1; Chapter Three) around them supports a picture of *how it is* for both staff and pupils at Eleanor Smith School. It also recognises that how it may be now may not necessarily be the case in the future and that this knowledge is subject to change – or as Danermark et al. (2002) and Scott (2010) call it, "fallible". A methodology such as action research is supportive of accessing and interpreting the knowledge and experiences of participants, giving equal value to all contributions, via participatory approaches. This was attractive to me, both professionally and personally.

Houston (2010) writes that action research is appropriate to a critical realist epistemology because it entails emancipatory change, recognising the value of human agency. He furthers this, stating that "…the essence of the method derives from Lewin's (1946) articulation of a series of interconnected cycles of analysis, goal-setting, planning, evaluation and change. I contend that the retroductive method…can be integrated within these cycles to good effect" (Houston, 2010, p.86). This cycle was used when conducting the collaborative inquiry method with staff (see Chapter Six). Action research investigations are based on these mechanisms and participants' meanings and the contextual factors that contribute to an outcome. The goals can be used to ameliorate oppressive mechanisms and actions taken to enhance empowering ones.

Inclusion and Empowerment
Listening to Pupil Voice
The philosophies behind critical realism and action research are equivalent wherein they both investigate the influence of varied ecologies. In this research, both pupil and staff experiences and views of resilience-based practice were ascertained. Given the failure of resilience research in the past to include children with complex needs in studies about them (see Chapter Three), it was crucial to address this. Including pupils in the data gathering is also supported by a critical realist view of empowerment. Riley and Docking (2004), at the London Leadership Centre for Education, write that the term "pupil voice" was coined when

two events co-occurred in the United Kingdom (UK). One event was when a group of pupils appeared before a Parliamentary Group to share their experiences of victimisation and discrimination, recommending a Children's Rights Commission in 2002. The other was through the introduction of citizenship programmes in the National Curriculum, coupled with inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) consulting pupils about their experiences in schools (Riley & Docking, 2004). In their review, Riley and Docking (2004) state that Levin puts forward five arguments supporting listening to pupil voice, these being;

1.   doing so facilitates the effective implementation of change

2.   it makes reform efforts more successful

3.   it can mobilise staff and parents in favour of reform

4.   listening to pupil voice is a foundation of constructionist learning, and

5.   it is fundamental to all improvement, given pupils are the producers of schools' outcomes.

These points relate directly to the philosophical underpinnings of critical realism and action research. They *include* participants as active researchers contributing their lived experiences to inform change. They have potential emancipatory agency that can effect social transformation, if allowed the opportunity to do so, as highlighted in Chapter Three.

The importance of including children in research about them has been demonstrated repeatedly now by a wide range of researchers (see Chapter Three). In their work with children and young people, both Lewis and Porter (2004) and Nic Gabbhaim, Sixsmith, Delaney, Moore, Inchley and O'Higgins (2007) emphasise the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child as expressly giving importance to the voices of children being heard and acted upon. They continue that "…participation and empowerment could be employed at all stages of an intervention to improve health, including during needs assessment, planning and evaluation" (Nic Gabbhaim et al., 2007, p.495); a view maintained through a critical realist theoretical framework. Riley and Docking (2004) support this quoting Pollard, who writes that by accessing pupil voice, teachers can gain an understanding of the curriculum as it is experienced, as opposed to the curriculum as it is intended.

Interestingly, when they listened to pupil voice, Riley and Docking (2004) found discrepancies between pupils' and teachers' perceptions of school life and they went on to recommend that pupils' views are acknowledged and acted upon in order for school life to improve. Importantly for this research, they recommend that "*All* voices need to be heard, not just those of the more able and articulate but also those who have learning difficulties and lack social confidence" (Rudduck in Riley and Docking, 2004, p.178, emphasis in the original). By including pupils in this research, as active agents of change, some of the methodological criticisms of resilience research in Chapter Three are addressed. Walmsley (2004, p.57) supports this in her review of inclusive research, writing that "…the group which may have the most need for health improvement and interventions, people with severe and profound learning difficulties, often literally do not have a voice". This contention is directly applicable to children with complex needs, who are often excluded

from day to day activities and participation that children without special needs have access to more frequently in resilience research (see Chapter Three).

Resilience research was founded on an ecological/systems approach to understanding how humans are affected by and have an effect upon their environment. Wise (2000) asked children with Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) to describe their experiences to her so that she may better inform educators about how to listen to them to enhance their practice. She quotes the ecological model as being a prime reason that pupils with ESBD should be listened to, writing, "Such approaches emphasise the importance of the pupil's environment to his or her behaviour, without focusing solely on the individual…it encourages a belief that problems can potentially lie within the systems surrounding the pupil, or at least in the interaction between the child and these systems" (Wise, 2000, p.11). The framework of critical realism, coupled with an action research methodology complement this view. By eliciting children's voices and trying to understand their experiences and perceptions, adults are better placed to intervene successfully. As Wise succinctly writes "The perspectives of children may differ from those of other parties and should be utilised when seeking to develop good practice" (Wise, 2000, p.14).

In 2007, Stewart and McWhirter published an article on the importance of listening to children and young people to foster resilience. They quote Noreen Wetton, a key health educator in the UK, who believed in "starting where people are" (Stewart & McWhirter, 2007). They write that Wetton believed children should be central to research intended to benefit them, and that key to this is actively listening to them. Children should be asked what they know, understand, feel and believe about being healthy (Stewart & McWhirter, 2007). Starting where pupils at Eleanor Smith School are made it essential to listen to their views in an attempt to understand what was important to them and why. Without trying to see school life through their eyes, my collaborators and I would not have a clear picture of what may be working, or acting against, the school developing resilience for, and with, pupils.

Crivello, Camfield and Woodhead (2009) conducted longitudinal research into the wellbeing perceptions of children living in poverty, in four countries. No stronger point could be made than Crivello et al's (2009, p.52) about the importance of eliciting pupil's views, where they write "…[pupil voice] promotes a holistic view of their experiences of both wellbeing and adversity that could be used to inform more effective and integrated interventions". They go on to state that children are experts in their own lives and that by accessing their viewpoints, researchers are able to affirm children as competent social actors who recognise their own agency and vulnerabilities, along with their potential for resilience (Crivello et al, 2009). Stalker (1998) upholds this view, asserting that individuals are the best authority on their own lives, experiences, feelings and views and that they have the right to express these. Through these shared views, mechanisms (see Definitions and Terms) that work for pupils may be identified, using an inclusive action research approach, supported by a critical realist framework.

When considering the needs of children at risk, Schonert-Reichl (2000, p.10) states "It is increasingly being recognized that it is important to collect data that permit children and youth opportunities to describe their own perceptions of their experiences". It is

disappointing when an internationally funded, child-focused agency such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2016) concede to not including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in their data, struggling with the same myriad issues resilience researchers themselves do (see Chapter Three). Another concern that has recently been voiced by researchers is the scarcity of descriptive and qualitative research that reflects children and adolescents' presentation of their own experiences; a view that Hart and Heaver (2013) expressed in their study of resilience research with children in schools. Schonert-Reichl (2000) goes on to say that such research could enormously inform and impact on intervention design in the future.

One is left to wonder at the potential impact and scope of influence UNICEF's (2016) latest review could have had if it had included children with complex needs. A key consideration for me when considering research design was how to work with pupils closely so as to elicit an accurate understanding of their perceptions. In their paper on the needs of children with learning difficulties, Daniels and Porter (2007, p.16) fully support Schonert-Reichl (2000), stating "It is important that the diversity of pupil views is heard". Ensuring inclusive methods were used with the pupils in this work was my responsibility as an ethical, activist researcher, hoping to produce some, if only small (see Chapter Nine), change informed by, and for the pupils.

In their work with secondary aged pupils who "beat the odds", Rees and Bailey (2003) summarise the work of fellow researchers who express the importance of accessing and listening to pupil voice. They state "Fundamentally, we need to position ourselves so we can hear children's stories, and so that these stories can challenge the narrative of our own practice with them. We need to work so that children and young people feel that they can own and direct their own story…by considering the perspective of the child or adolescent, a new insight and exciting knowledge about what they regard as being useful in overcoming their difficulties is revealed" (Rees & Bailey, 2003, p.45). This is pertinent to this research because one of the aims is to understand what resilience looks like for children with complex needs, and how they think adults can support them to develop this further. It also has the potential to highlight barriers to, and facilitators of implementing the RF at the school that adults may overlook or minimise. This lead to consideration not only of pupil and staff views, but also the potential influence of my own, as an insider researcher.

Action Research as an Insider

I needed to acknowledge my role as an insider positioned at the heart of the research, the setting and the people, along with the fact that one of my supervisors was a co-author of the Resilience Framework (see section "Potential Role Conflict" in Chapter Nine). The action research design to this inquiry embraced the strengths and limitations of being an insider. In her review of the uses of action research as a design, Meyer (2003, p.105) asserts "It could be argued that outside facilitators of practice-centred research should be practitioners, who have an in-depth understanding of the contexts in which they work. This clinical credibility would allow them to more easily become associated as insiders, by demonstrating greater sensitivity to practice issues. This closeness would help the research better capture the realities of the practice world…"

An action research design complements this stance because, as Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002) state, action research recognises that researchers are unavoidably a part of the social systems in which investigations are situated. It was unrealistic to pretend to be impartial with people I had worked closely with over a long period of time. We had a shared, although not necessarily uniform, understanding of the school's pupils - a realist's perspective. The nature of this research was exploratory and inductive and sought to inform future practice. Again, this philosophy complements a critical realist framework of transformation and empowerment. I have a close relationship to the school that this research is based in, and I am seen by staff and pupils alike as 'one of them'. There are advantages and disadvantages to being positioned closely to research investigations as an insider. A fuller discussion of these issues is covered in Chapter Five.

Summary

This Chapter has outlined the complementary nature of a critical realist epistemology, viewing human realities within an ecological framework, taking an action research methodology to do so. The tenets of each of the three models or philosophies supports the other. The key principles of a critical realist epistemology that supports an action research methodology have been highlighted, along with the importance of recognising the impact of context on human agency and experience/reality. The parallel between the ecological model and critical realism's contention of an interplay between various levels or systems of a bi-directional nature with individuals, which in turn complements the contexts of children living in disadvantage with complex needs, has been demonstrated. There is potential for open ended systems to change or to be changed. This philosophy instils hope in me as a researcher that positive social transformation may be achieved to some extent for children, with the poor predicted outcomes reviewed in Chapter Two, as a result of their and others' input. The following Chapter presents considerations necessary when using mixed methods to access these lived experiences.

Chapter Five: Framing Lived Experiences

Introduction

The intention and collaborative nature of this research is captured by the following quote that highlights the contributory nature of anyone's role to the overall performance of a team:

> "On a visit to the NASA Space Centre, President John F Kennedy spoke to an employee sweeping up in one of the buildings. "What's your job here?" asked the President. "Well Mr President", replied the sweeper, "I'm helping to put a man on the moon" (Ofsted, 2010 p8).

This Chapter demonstrates how, by using mixed methods, I am able to present the data that emerged from staff and pupils with as much confidence as possible. The methodology is that of collaborative action research, informed by a critical realist approach, as outlined in Chapter Four. When initially grappling with how to best answer the research questions, I first considered generating qualitative data alone. However, with further reading, I wanted the interpretations of shared experiences to be verified with data that observably demonstrated facilitators and barriers to using the Resilience Framework ((RF) see Appendix One) in practice. This was especially important, as the school was embarking on action research, with me situated as an insider researcher. The benefits and strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data are discussed in this Chapter.

Whether data generated from multiple sources would marry up to how the school is viewed as being successful is outlined. I consider what do Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), parents, pupils and mainstream schools see as 'a better outcome' for these young people. On this basis, I used quantitative data to triangulate collaborator's perceptions and experiences to add as much rigour as possible to the interpretations we arrived at as a collective. The following Chapter outlines arguments regarding the strengths of each data source with the added support of quantitative approaches to triangulate the qualitative evidence. As stated in Chapter Four, a critical realist approach supports using mixed methods in research. Using accessible and collaborative methods was essential, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four, and I outline how I arrived at these. Finally, this Chapter considers the need for reflexivity to illuminate findings that are as rigorous as possible. Chapter Six outlines the instruments and procedures used for each data source in detail.

Critical Realism and Mixed Methods

Crossan (2003) argues that a researcher must know the limitations of their chosen methods, stating that "…the main weakness [of qualitative research] is due to the proximity of the researcher to the investigation" (Crossan, 2003, p.53). Given my position in this research this was a key consideration with respect to the impact I may have had on the data generation and analysis. Conversely, Crossan (2003) writes that positivist or quantitative methods may produce a superficial view, with limited data of the phenomenon they are used to investigate. He lists the benefits of multiple perspectives as researchers being able to define their goals, questions, methods and analyses, along with being able to interpret their results (Crossan, 2003). The suitability of mixed methods to this research is supported by Crossans' (2003) contention that this is a desirable way of studying small samples in

depth. Crossan (2003) states that by using mixed methods, researchers are able to establish a degree of assertion, as opposed to absolute truth. When asking participants' views, it was clear that the data generated would be evidence of beliefs and values, as opposed to undisputable "fact". Bhaskar (1998, in Clark, McIntyre and Cruikshank 2007, p.525) writes "A core tenet of critical realism is that claims to truth are resolved and compared through discussion and debate that seeks...to identify those findings/beliefs that appear to be truthful". This research lent itself to the use of mixed methods because, in accordance with a critical realist approach, its aim was to ascertain the existence of a shared reality, but also to investigate differences (mechanisms) within this.

Mixed methods were used to answer the research questions (see Chapter Four), based upon the previously outlined rationale. These methods took the form of:

a. Pre and post Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores for participating pupils (quantitative, see Appendix Two)

b. Pupil attendance data (quantitative)

c. Academic attainment data (quantitative)

d. A pre-RF implementation audit and post RF implementation survey of staff awareness of key concepts and confidence at using these, (quantitative, extensive data in Likert scales; and qualitative, intensive data in open ended questions, Appendix Three)

e. A Collaborative Inquiry (CI) group consisting of a cross section of staff working with pupils in various roles (qualitative, intensive data, Appendices Five and Six)

f. Body Mapping (BM) with a small group of pupils to determine the impact on them that staff had using the RF in their daily practice (qualitative, Appendix Seven)

The participants, procedure and analysis relating to each method is expanded upon in Chapter Six.

A critical realist epistemology supports the methodology of action research and participatory research on multiple levels (see Chapter Four). The children involved are a disadvantaged group who are generally excluded from wider society due to their difficulties. The participatory approach includes a cross section of all staff, regardless of role, unlike most educational research which may involve teachers, support staff and senior leaders only, as explained in Chapter Three. Ironically, the Ofsted (2010) research quoted at the beginning of this chapter did just that. Coupled with this, the purpose was to investigate and transform daily practice to improve outcomes (Mertens, 2016) for a group of children habitually overlooked by resilience research (Hart & Heaver, 2013). The mixed methods approach, supported by a critical realist epistemology, recognises the importance of understanding the meanings made by people who share a common experience, in a context that is complex by nature.

A critical realist approach to research advocates using methods that best fit the research question. "Critical realists argue that the choice of methods should be dictated by the nature of the research problem. In many cases it is suggested that the most effective approach will be to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods…" (McEvoy & Richards, 2006, p.71). As Clark et al. (2007) argue a critical realist perspective is philosophically strong, as it allows for the measurement of outcomes, while still recognising the complexity of the contexts people live within. Clark et al.'s (2007) assertion is entirely relevant to this work. As demonstrated, there are many factors sitting within a child's ecology that can influence outcomes – both positive and negative (see Chapters Two and Three). They may have personal agency over some of these outcomes or exert no control upon them at all. Important to this research was considering how staff could use the methods to illuminate possible mechanisms at play.

Houston (2010) contrasts critical realism with naïve realism, which contends that people who share the same experiences interpret them in the same way. As outlined in Chapter Four, critical realism states that while people have a shared external reality, this may be interpreted and experienced differentially. The approach supports a stratified view of reality, which may be described as; "…intersubjective meanings…being a stratum of reality that arose from individuals but which acted back upon individuals to constrain them, with individuals being able to change such shared meanings through collective agency" (Clark et al., 2007, p.253). Multiple methods were necessary to accurately portray the complexity of these meanings and to enable staff to identify the mechanisms behind what was being experienced and observed in the school as outcomes for pupils.

Houston (2010) further supports McEvoy and Richards (2006), maintaining that the epistemological chasm between qualitative and quantitative approaches is overcome by critical realism. He goes on to contend "The positional wars between qualitative and quantitative researchers recede in significance once it is accepted that the focus of inquiry, first and foremost, is on human emancipation" (Houston, 2010 p85). Mertens (2016, p.12) agrees, writing "No one specific design or methodology is demanded in transformative research. Many approaches can be used, such as participatory action research…as long as they are congruent with its philosophical assumptions about ethics, reality, and knowledge". Qualitative methods may reveal the structures and mechanisms present in people's experienced lives, while quantitative methods may inform the extent to which qualitative data is relevant to others in similar contexts.

Critical realism also uses a person's own accounts of their experiences and interpretations as a starting point. This strategy was employed with both pupils and staff to attempt to understand how staff may support developing resilience in their pupils, alongside exploring how pupils perceive what teachers do to facilitate this, or what they could do to improve their practice in future. Bhaskar urges researchers to carefully consider the reasons people give for their actions (Houston, 2010), and it must be acknowledged that these perceptions are open to distortions. Quantitative data may support or refute the personal representations given by collaborators. Wenger-Trayner, Wenger-Trayner, Cameron, Eryigit-Madzwamuse and Hart (2017, p. 20) suggest that "Indicators become meaningful through stories; stories become representative by referencing indicators". For example, if a teacher reported that she has improved a pupil's attendance through various strategies using the

RF, but the attendance data for that pupil hadn't improved, this can be further investigated. It is possible that the teacher reported positive change to impress others or she may believe her strategies have been successful. This was especially important considering my position as an insider researcher. I needed to be as confident as I could be that accurate and honest portrayals of views and experiences had been shared, given I was an interested researcher and colleague.

In their work on critical realism and the social sciences, Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen and Karlsson (2002, p.204) write "It [critical realism] does not exclude any method *a priori*, but the choice of method should be governed, on the one hand by what we want to know, and on the other by what we can learn with the help of different methods…This often leads us to require a combination of several different methods". The main undertaking in research for these authors is the search for generative mechanisms, and they contend that using mixed methods may be most useful in identifying these mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002). An example of this is Rees and Bailey's (2003) work, whose case studies with ten resilient secondary aged pupils identified factors that were within the reach of most people to promote their well-being. They used mixed methods to verify the mechanisms responsible for this. It was my intention to be able to produce a similar outcome, with the ultimate goal being to inform others of findings at Eleanor Smith School and to make recommendations for future practice.

Luthar and Brown (2007) argue that quantitative research within the field of resilience needs to be complemented by qualitative understandings and that the two approaches, when coupled, give richer meaning to human experience. They give an example of a programme evaluation of an anti-poverty effort, asserting that "Initial quantitative assessments had not included several dimensions later learned to be crucial for understanding program impact…" (Luthar & Brown, 2007, p.939). Given that a key driver within a critical realist framework is to understand mechanisms at work at a deep level, it appeared that accessing staff and pupils' views and experiences was crucial.

Confidence under Scrutiny

Many researchers in the field, such as Rees and Bailey (2003) acknowledge the importance of understanding people at an individual level (via qualitative methodologies). They write that quantitative, statistical approaches may simplify how complex human interactions, behaviours and contexts are. Mertens (2007) summarises this, asserting that transformative methodologies may address the complexities of research in complex settings and provide the basis for social change. The aim of Eleanor Smith School is to trigger and support social transformation for pupils and families on many levels in their ecologies. Using mixed methods to uncover how best to do this provides this research with rich understandings of human experience and informs future practice.

In their overview of the paucity of qualitative research in the medical profession, Greenhalgh and Taylor (1997, p.740) also highlight multiple methods as complementing each other, stating that quantitative approaches are repeatable, and therefore, the same measurements should yield the same results time after time. However, they assert that the strength of qualitative research lies in validity, or closeness to the truth (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997). McEvoy and Richards (2006) contend that, when used in isolation, neither

quantitative nor qualitative methods are enough to provide a complete analysis. As a result of this, they recommend using mixed methods as complementary partners (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). They caution, however, that it may be difficult to link contextual, interpretative findings with empirical, observable results gleaned from quantitative data (McEvoy and Richards, 2006).

Despite this, anti-conflationists argue "…although there are general differences between quantitative and qualitative methods, these differences cannot be described as an all-embracing dichotomy…the differences between methods are not always as extreme as they are made out to be. Qualitative methods are often used in the preparatory stages of quantitative research and qualitative methods can be used to test theoretical hypotheses" (McEvoy & Richards, 2006, p.68 - 69). As an insider researcher, with an interest in the RF and potential bias toward its success, outlined in Chapter Four, I felt more confident using quantitative methods to triangulate qualitative data, when considering presenting the findings to wider audiences in the future (see the Insider Research section of this chapter and limitations in Chapter Nine).

In their overview of mixed methods research Doyle, Brady and Byrne (2009) argue that mixing methods is useful for complex, multi-faceted research problems. They list eight purposes of mixed methods research; triangulation, offsetting weaknesses and providing stronger inferences, answering different research questions, explanation of findings, illustration of data, hypothesis development and testing, and finally, instrument development and testing. Yeung (1997 p56) supports Doyle et al. (2009), writing that "…a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative research has been advocated because a selection among these positions ought often to depend on the purposes and circumstances of the research, rather than being derived from methodological or philosophical commitments". As asserted, I felt more confident that by using mixed methods the data would stand up to scrutiny and I would be able to justify themes generated with respect to the research questions. Ungar (2004) ultimately argues for a collaboration of the two approaches, asserting that by combining the two research paradigms, a dialectic may be formed in which some combination of the two may produce the most informed findings. In this research, quantitative methodologies were used to triangulate the views of the pupils and the staff. The issue of triangulation and how research may demonstrate this within its findings is expanded upon in the next section of this Chapter.

This research approach acknowledges that to gain as deep an insight as possible into participants' shared reality, both quantitative and qualitative approaches to developing a common understanding of the mechanisms at work were essential. Quantitative evidence may support or dispute qualitative findings, while providing measurable outcomes. This would benefit both pupils and the school itself, as its 'success' is judged by such evidence. This issue is expanded upon in more depth in Chapter Ten. If the quantitative data triangulated the qualitative themes, I could be more confident of the findings as a researcher, and it would also mean that similar settings may be able to replicate the work of staff and generalise the findings into their own practice (presented in Chapters Nine and Ten).

Conversely, qualitative methods allow for an exploration of why the findings may be as they are. The qualitative data may illuminate what needs to change for outcomes to improve for the pupils at Eleanor Smith School. Quantitative data does not have the ability to generate solutions, but it can highlight areas to be addressed, or shine a light on strengths to be replicated. Mixed methods may generate knowledge about the mechanisms that are working for and against better outcomes for children in this research. The following sections outline the strengths and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and when they may be most useful being used in isolation, or in combination. This review guides the reader through the literature search conducted when considering the methodological approach I would take with this work, given the context of Eleanor Smith School and the needs of the pupils.

Qualitative Methods: Uncovering Mechanisms through Meaning

Qualitative research is a methodology that has the power to capture the complexity of people's interactions both in and on their contexts. McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.71) concur with this assertion, maintaining that "Qualitative methods can help illuminate complex concepts and relationships that are unlikely to be captured by predetermined response categories or standardised quantitative measures". Coupled with this, qualitative approaches are based on the interpretivist paradigm which seeks to explore the way in which the world is socially understood and constructed (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). It may also serve to explain outliers in quantitative data sets.

Qualitative methods have the potential to reveal the structures and mechanisms present in people's experienced lives. Ritchie and Spencer (in Bryman and Burgess, 1994) also contend that qualitative methodologies can provide insight into barriers to, and strategies for, change. As mentioned, when deciding on the most appropriate methods to use to answer the research questions, I decided on qualitative methods initially. This was because many researchers in the field, such as Rees and Bailey (2003,) acknowledge the importance of understanding people at an individual level. In this work, it was important to attempt to answer the research questions about practice and perceptions. Ungar (2004) outlines the benefits of qualitative methodologies to the study of resilience in five ways. These are:

1. the discovery of unnamed processes
2. the descriptions gained apply to very specific contexts
3. they elicit and give power to minority voices so that positive outcomes may be identified that are specific to that group
4. they avoid generalisation in favour of transferability to specific groups and settings, and
5. they may hold researchers accountable for the inherent biases they hold, if a reflexive approach is taken

Gilgun (2006) argues the strengths of qualitative research from a different perspective. She writes "Can we do helpful research if we are unaware of our theoretical and methodological assumptions and biases?" (Gilgun, 2006, p.438). She states that careful consideration of whether findings, theories and methodologies are relevant contributes to good quality qualitative research (Gilgun, 2006). She parallels the paradigm of evidence-based practice (EBP), a medical model, with the four cornerstones of qualitative research principles (Gilgun,

2006). Gilgun reports that EBP is based on the assumptions of using best research evidence, clinical expertise, and physician's preferences and values. The principles of qualitative research she aligns with EBP's assumptions are; research findings, theory and methodological principles, researcher's expertise and research informant's preferences and values (Gilgun, 2006).

She cites theory as being important to practitioners because it can be used to "…help them see what might be important and to help them craft, interpret, and evaluate interventions" (Gilgun, 2006, p.439). She points out how experience is linked to research (Gilgun, 2006). My experience as a practitioner led to me considering the current research field. Her third point is about ontology – understanding how it feels to be a child with complex needs, both temporally and contextually. As Gilgun (2006) writes, a deep appreciation of the conditions under which human beings live and experience their lives contributes to excellent practice. Researchers cannot make assumptions; they must ask participants and try to be reflective enough to keep their biases and expectations from tainting the data. Qualitative research addresses this by attempting to gain insight into what it is that the research informant wants and values. Re-checking interpretations and assigned meaning is essential for this to occur, as highlighted in Chapters Six and Eight.

Finally, Gilgun (2006, p.440) states that the fourth assumption of qualitative research is "…the idea that a main purpose…is to understand informants in their own terms to the extent that this is possible". Researchers must be mindful of how their thoughts and experiences can impact upon the accuracy of accounts furnished by participants. My checking meaning with the staff and pupils themselves and enlisting a co-analyst to challenge assumptions allays this limitation somewhat (see Chapters Six and Eight). Gilgun (2006, p.441) recommends that we must assume we are wrong to be as accurate as possible when interpreting qualitative data, and that our hypotheses should be open to refute and reformation if necessary. Concluding, Gilgun (2006) cites qualitative research as having the ability to craft individual interventions, a key next step in resilience research, outlined in Chapter Three. Findings informed by those who live the experience are more likely to reach the desired outcomes, the human dimensions of interventions are addressed, and dignity is upheld.

Ungar (2004, p.91, emphasis in the original) implores researchers to take approaches that use qualitative methods, writing "It seems our limited success quantitatively begs us to switch horses midstream, and to take a closer look at what differences make *the* difference between individuals". In looking for meaning, he recommends using methodological diversity to add rigour and challenge quantitative limitations (Ungar, 2004). He adds that knowledge production should include those who are not usually accessed or asked so that a deeper understanding of lived experience in their contexts may be gained (Ungar, 2004). Using qualitative approaches therefore answers some of the criticisms levelled at past resilience research, as discussed in Chapter Three. Ungar (2004) argues that data is most credible when it reflects the people that it comes from. Using an analogy, it would be meaningless for research on the physical and mental experience of childbirth to be conducted with midwives and not women who have actually experienced birth themselves. This methodology supports the research questions and implored me to consider how to include pupils and to involve staff as co-researchers.

In her work with pupils with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), Hart (2012, p.4) supports Ungar (2004), summarising the strengths of qualitative research methodologies. She cites these as; identification of unnamed protective processes which are relevant to the lived experiences of individuals, giving voice to marginalised and minority groups, giving credibility to data, and resisting the generalisation of findings (Hart, 2012). Typically, pupils with complex needs are marginalised due to many factors in their lives, including, but not limited to, environments of disadvantage and exclusion from the community (see Chapters One and Three).

One could not state the case more clearly than Swain, Heymand and Gillman (2010) for the use of qualitative methodologies in research such as this. In their consideration of ethical issues when conducting research with people with learning difficulties, they quote Booth: "The 'excluded voice thesis' postulates that narrative methods [one form of qualitative methodology] provide access to the perspectives and experience of oppressed groups who lack the power to make their voices heard through traditional modes of academic discourse" (Swain et al., 2010, p.22). Pupils who attend Eleanor Smith School are excluded from their mainstream schools, from after school clubs, from their places of worship and from their own families at times. They cope with exclusion and oppression on a daily basis, as I stated in Chapter Two.

In support of using methodologies other than traditional quantitative measurement, Margalit (2003, p.84) writes that research is needed to understand the meaning of life experiences, stating "More research is needed to…examine how early life experiences in children with [Learning Difficulties] predict the formation of a meaningful social support system and how these children cope with stress". Ungar (2005) furthers this, stating that research needs to look at children's life worlds and identify how political and social forces impact upon them. Researchers need to try to encapsulate children's experiences as they are for them.

By using qualitative methods, Richardson (1997, p.1119) states "…the researcher [is able to] allow his/her mind to disengage slightly to make new and perhaps subtle connections between otherwise apparently unconnected data". Swain et al (2010, p.27) warn that "Through such interpretations, the voices of people with learning difficulties are filtered and given meaning in researchers' terms" and that perhaps, these interpretations could be erroneous. Nic Gabbhaim, Sixsmith, Delaney, Moore, Inchley and O'Higgins (2007) also caution that the process of interpretation can be dependent on the skills, experiences, political and epistemological standpoints of researchers in relation to hearing the voices of children. To alleviate this, these researchers recommend the raw data being given to another group of children for analysis and to a third group for organisation and presentation (Nic Gabbhaim et al., 2007). Alternatively, a co-analyst could challenge the meanings made and ask for evidence of the assumptions, themes interpreted and conclusions drawn.

Quantitative Methods: Triangulating Perceptions

Quantitative data can provide a clear, objective view of change, in the positivist tradition. Quantitative methods may complement their qualitative counterparts by evidencing the extent to which qualitative data is relevant to others in similar contexts. For example, if staff or pupils reported barriers to the RF qualitatively in this research, this may be verified with

quantitative data, such as evidence of a reduction in their attendance. One would make the assumption that, if qualitative data is interpreted and presented accurately, quantitative measures would reflect this. Data from both methodologies would show an improvement, or a decrease, in whatever variable is being investigated (see Chapter Nine). McEvoy and Richards (2006) write that quantitative approaches are based on the philosophy that human perceptions need to be set aside to be able to identify objective facts based on observations. In taking such an approach, generalisable laws are generated that are based on statistical measures. By providing such evidence, other schools or organisations may be able to reproduce what Eleanor Smith School had done to promote resilience within their pupils, as recommended in Chapter Ten. However, a limitation of quantitative methods is that the statistical information generated is universal and only specific to the particular time and place in which it is measured.

I determined that quantitative data may be useful in supporting or refuting the personal representations shared by staff and pupils during the qualitative data collection phase. In the earlier example mentioned of a teacher reporting using RF strategies to improve attendance, while the data showed no such improvement, this could be further investigated. This may merely be misguided perception, an 'honest mistake', or answering in a manner that was brought about by feeling a pressure to 'say the right thing' This was an important consideration, given the group setting of the CI, with personal and professional relationships playing a part in the dynamics, complicated further by staff knowing my potential investment in the RF itself. It was possible that subjectivity may create issues (Grant, 2013), such as staff reporting positive change to impress others or beliefs that their practice was successful when the data shows that may not have been the case.

McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.71) contend that "The strength of quantitative methods is that they may be used to develop reliable descriptions and provide accurate comparisons…identify patterns and associations that may otherwise be masked". The intention was to use three quantitative measures of pupil 'success' or improvement – pupil scores on a social and emotional rating survey (the SDQ), school attendance, and academic attainment with the assumption being that if one measure indicated an improvement, logically the others should also if the data is accurate. Simply put, if a pupil regularly attends a school that is successfully meeting his or her needs, one would expect progress on their social and emotional ratings to subsequently to improve, as the literature indicates (see Chapter Two). Such evidence provides added strength to levels of assertion and confidence given to data sets when combined.

A further limitation of quantitative methods is that exceptions to the rule are sometimes ignored. In their comments on the difficulties of studying children with learning difficulties in a resilience framework, Donahue and Pearl (2003, p.90) write of "Acknowledgements that individual differences are not simply "noise" or measurement error in the data, but must be taken into account by any viable theory". Donahue and Pearl (2003) highlight the importance of individual differences and small interventions that are applicable to the child. Rees and Bailey (2003) warn that exceptions to generalisations may be forgotten, ignored or considered to be "flukes". If exceptions are carefully explored however, many ideas may be found that present possible solutions. This type of analysis does not occur necessarily with

quantitative research. Using mixed methods, supported by a critical realist epistemology, gave me the flexibility to seek deeper understandings of lived human experience.

Quantitative methodologies also raise the issue of something being done to those involved in research, not with them. Criticisms of past resilience research by authors such as Farthing (2016) have raised this as a concern (see Chapter Three). The researcher is in the role of expert and the child is there to be studied, such that information at an experiential level for the child is not considered. These criticisms of quantitative methodologies are answered by the use of inclusive research practices. Such research attempts to consult the people it is aimed at, establishing what interventions would be useful, given they will be the 'consumers' of the end product. The benefits of both methodological approaches may be achieved through mixed methods, using generalisable, quantitative findings to triangulate qualitative themes of lived, human experience.

Triangulating the Data via Complementary Quantitative Methods

Triangulation of the data was important in this work. Yeung (1997, p.64) answers this, writing "Triangulation, in particular its methodological form, can do much to improve the validity and reliability of data collected". Different data sets may complement each other in revealing different facets of the social world and methodological triangulation is compatible with deploying both intensive [qualitative] and extensive [quantitative] methods in realist research (Yeung, 1997). McEvoy and Richards (2006) state that there are three purposes to triangulation; confirmation, completeness and abductive inspiration. Confirmation means data is triangulated to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). Completeness indicates triangulation is done to provide complementary perspectives and to generate a greater depth of understanding of the findings (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). Finally, abductive inspiration refers to the ability to make retroductive inferences from the observations made, from which causal mechanisms that contribute to these observations may be elucidated (McEvoy & Richards, 2006).

Convinced of the benefits and flexibility of qualitative methods offered to enable myself and collaborators to answer the research questions, I was still curious as to the complementary nature and insights quantitative methods may contribute to this work. This was especially so, given my position as an insider. The following section presents the arguments for the use of quantitative measures, along with answering the demand for rigorous findings, achieved through triangulation and checking data interpretation with co-researchers. At the outset of this research, I valued and saw the contribution qualitative data could make toward answering the research questions. I wanted to ensure that the experiences and meanings made by staff and pupils were verified, via quantitative data; essentially triangulating the evidence to ensure as much rigour as possible. Research may be viewed as being more reliable and generalisable when numerous informant's views have been accessed, using multiple methods that triangulate the findings.

Houston (2010, p.84) contends that "…mixed-methods triangulation might be understood as a primary manifestation of retroduction with its focus on actors' meanings and social structure…critical realism overcomes the epistemological chasm between qualitative and quantitative approaches". As previously highlighted, Houston's (2010) warning of the "positional wars" between methods may be ameliorated by triangulation. I wanted as

holistic a picture of collaborators' lived experiences as possible, whereby each method gave strength to, and evidence for, the other; regardless of whether this showed 'successful' implementation of the RF in the school. Valuable insights and lessons that may inform future practice could be learnt. These are shared in Chapters Nine and Ten. In the words of McEvoy and Richards (2006), using mixed methods to triangulate the data may provide a "…greater sense of balance and perspective" (McEvoy & Richards, 2006, p.76).

Triangulation may be achieved within one method on its own, using multiple sources of information. An example of this is provided by van Heugten (2004, p.210) who states that triangulation of results is possible in qualitative research also "…by exploring context, process, coherence and connectivity of themes in the accounts of respondents". Holmlund Nelson, Slavit, Perkins and Hathorn (2008, p.8) state that it is important to do this as an insider, as one can become so immersed in the research itself that triangulation through other sources is necessary. In their study, they attempted to achieve this through interviewing staff further, upon completion of their collaborative inquiry group sessions (Holmlund et al., 2008). Huffman and Kalnin (2003) tested the results of their collaborative inquiry data with focus group and survey outcomes. Madhill, Jordan and Shirley (2000, p.17) state "…realist qualitative research can demonstrate a level of objectivity and reliability, interpreted appropriately as 'consistency of meaning', through triangulating findings of independent researchers". I attempted to do this by co-opting a second analyst and feeding back the qualitative data to staff and pupils to check the accuracy of the themes that emerged.

Another purpose of triangulation may be to alleviate researcher effects on the data. Madhill et al. (2000) warn of the effect of the researcher on findings which can create a credibility problem for qualitative approaches from the perspective of quantitative psychology. As an insider researcher, it was imperative that I chose a methodology that was appropriate to my collaborators, along with adding robustness to the findings. Gilgun (2006, p.440) reflects my thoughts on the position I was in, writing "Personal experience is such a part of us as researchers and as ethical beings that I doubt it is possible to set aside our personal experiences as we design, implement, interpret, and disseminate our research". To alleviate this criticism, triangulation was used, along with co-opting the second analyst to assist with data interpretation (discussed further in Chapters Six and Eight). This research triangulated the qualitative data via multiple methods and attempted to openly report any potential biases, discussed in the reflexivity and rigour section of this chapter (see also Chapter Nine).

Grant (2013, p.3) argues that "…qualitative research grounded in the sufficiency of the literal voice relatively neglects important inter-related issues…these are the historical, contextual and discursive circumstances constituting the subjectivity and inter-subjectivity involved in the production and performance of voice". Issues of power, ambiguity and contradictions within and between subjects makes assumptions of one coherent voice among participants problematic (Grant, 2013). Consequently, Grant (2013) warns that researchers must always consider these issues, arguing that indisputable meaning is a myth. Grant (2013) goes on to state that the task of researchers is to facilitate and verify the production of the authentic voice of participants (Grant, 2013), stating that there is a "provisional 'truth'" (Grant, 2013 p.6). These cautions could be assigned to this research, with me as an insider, but using quantitative data to triangulate the co-produced themes

alleviated some of this concern. Research can be critiqued fairly if its limitations and weaknesses are made plain and write ups should disclose these limitations as objectively as possible (see Chapter Nine).

Methods: How to Capture Complexity

Consideration of appropriate, inclusive methods meant I needed to be mindful of keeping the voice of those most affected central, while accessing information accurately so that it could inform resilience interventions in the future, shared in Chapter Ten. Quantitative methodologies rely on the observable, using positivist techniques such as surveys, questionnaires and measurement scales. Hart and Heaver (2013) raised many concerns about quantitative methods being used with children with complex needs, such as their reliance on them being able to communicate expressively and receptively. These issues have been fully outlined in Chapters Two and Three. Using accessible qualitative approaches with children with complex needs addresses some of these concerns.

Participatory Research

The importance of including those being studied at the centre of the research methodology was introduced in Chapter Three. Lewis and Porter (2004, p.3) state "There is a growing expectation that research in the field of learning difficulties should be both inclusive and participatory in nature". Walmsley (2004) writes that inclusive research began in the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s and that it can be divided into two methodological traditions; participatory and emancipatory. This research is of a participatory tradition. Walmsley (2004, p.55) asserts that "…participatory research entails a commitment to researchers working alongside people with learning disabilities as allies". A word of caution is given by Walmsley (2004), maintaining that involving people with learning difficulties in research should carefully consider the time scale required and methods used to gain their involvement. This is particularly pertinent when considering working alongside children with complex needs.

In her methodological review of qualitative research, Nind (2008) supports Walmsley's (2004) assertions that in participatory research, the researcher and the participants work together. Stalker (1998) defines the tradition of participatory research as having three main principles:

1.   that the researcher as "expert" and the researched is merely an object of investigation is inequitable,
2.   that people have the right to be consulted about and involved in research that is concerned with issues affecting their lives, and
3.   that the quality and relevance of research is improved when disabled people are involved closely in the process

Richardson (1997, p.1114), writes that participatory research "…may potentially strengthen the voice of people with learning difficulties and enable them to express their views". He quotes French's definition of participatory research as "…actively involving disabled people in the production of research knowledge and the selection and presentation of that knowledge for communication and publication" (Richardson, 1997, p.1116), and he cautions researchers using a participatory model that they need to be reflexive and mindful that we

are never value free or neutral (Richardson, 1997). As outlined in later sections of this chapter, Richardson's (1997) warning is particularly pertinent to me as an insider researcher.

Nind (2008, p.5) raises the important distinction of whether research is being done "…on or with people with learning/communication difficulties…" She gives practical, ethical guidelines that should be considered by all researchers when working with people, especially those with learning disabilities. These considerations are "…challenging but achievable…" (Nind, 2008, p.16). Thinking ahead to the practicalities of pursuing the research itself and handling issues sensitively and with care is essential (Nind, 2008). Helpfully, Nind (2008) provides an outline of various alternative methods that can be used appropriately with people with learning difficulties, such as; focus groups, photos, life histories, narratives, posters and observation. It is increasingly the case in participatory research that the story of the investigation is co-researched and presented (Nind, 2008). Including traditionally marginalised children and giving them ownership of recommendations made from a collaborative approach was important. Given Hart and Heaver's (2013) and Farthing's (2016) calls for participation and inclusion of those being studied at the very least being given a voice, it would have been most unsatisfactory and antiquated to choose methods that did not do so (see Chapter Three).

Considerations
Language and Meaning
Researchers such as Benner, Nelson and Epstein (2002) and Nelson, Benner and Cheney (2005) have demonstrated the high co-morbidity between children who have diagnosed learning difficulties and SEMH difficulties (see Chapter Three). Children with language deficits are at substantially higher risk for antisocial behaviour than children without diagnosed speech and/or language disorders. They found that researchers "…estimated that the concomitant prevalence of language deficits in children who exhibit antisocial behaviors is 10 times that of the general population…" (Benner et al., 2002, p.44) and that this can have a huge impact on relationships with others over their lifetime. Nelson et al. (2005) argue that SEMH difficulties are exacerbated by language challenges. It was therefore inappropriate to use traditional measurement tools that rely solely on language, both receptive and expressive, with the children in this research. Given all children in this research have SEMH difficulties, the chance of their having language difficulties is also high. This made finding methods that did not rely heavily on language abilities essential.

Measures of Outcome
According to Miller (1996), a typical outcome measure of resilience in pupils is academic achievement. This however, does not indicate that if a child does not perform well academically, they are non-resilient (see Chapters Three and Ten). This view is narrow and needs broadening (Bottrell, 2009; Friedli, 2009). Miller (1996) endorses Rutter's (1999) premise that having a learning difficulty and successfully negotiating this may have a "steeling effect" as mentioned in Chapter Three. Many people with learning difficulties go on to achieve success, despite their additional difficulties. Ungar's (2004) review of the evidence from qualitative resilience research also questions the arbitrary nature of identifying risk factors. He goes on to state that social and cultural factors can determine what may be characterised as good or poor outcomes, and that qualitative research

facilitates this context specificity (Ungar, 2004).   He cites that the constructive use of aggression in one context may be viewed in another as a poor outcome (Ungar, 2004).

Anxiety

In my professional experience, an example of pupils responding negatively to anxiety provoking situations is often seen at Eleanor Smith School when educational psychologists assess them to inform Educational, Health and Care Plans ((EHCPs), see Chapter Ten). The traditional approach used is formal quantitative assessments, such as cognitive tests. This type of testing creates huge amounts of anxiety for the pupils, and they typically seek to avoid the experience through non-cooperation, diversion or absconding from the situation altogether. This research demanded a methodology that avoided such high levels of anxiety-invoking responses from pupils. It was desirable that they would enjoy and engage with the methods used and were able to access the process successfully as collaborators.

Appropriate Alternatives

There are a variety of creative methods being used in the literature with children and those with learning difficulties, such as; poetry, art, songs, drawing (Richardson, 1997) cartoons, simple language and video (Walmsley, 2004), narratives, cue cards, computers (Lewis and Porter, 2004) 3 wishes, incomplete sentences questionnaire, metaphor (Theron, 2006) draw and write (Nic Gabbhaim et al. 2007) photos, tours of the context/setting, mosaics, body mapping (Crivello, Camfield & Woodhead, 2009) picture sheets and scaling (Hart, 2012). Daniels and Porter (2007, p.15) write "…literature with reference to children who are vulnerable and have special educational needs, suggest the importance of activity-based methods and the attractiveness of computers."

There is sometimes a direct relationship between question format and responsiveness from children, according to the linguistic and cognitive demands placed on children through the use of interviews, for example. Daniels and Porter (2007) suggest that questioning may not be the most useful format for children with special educational needs. They share that social stories have been deemed more appropriate, especially for children with autism (Daniels & Porter, 2007). However, these suggestions pertain only to pupil's well-being, not resilience as a construct, and to children with autism as a special need, not SEMH difficulties. Hart (2012) cites Lewis and Porter's (2004) work, stating that when working with children with special needs, communication needs to be viewed flexibly and imaginatively to circumvent problems with memory, emotion, social skills and the understanding and expression of language.

Hart's (2012) research with pupils in a PRU (all with Statements of Special Educational Needs for SEMH difficulties) found the use of scaling with pictures particularly helpful and accessible. From this research, she was able to make recommendations to mainstream schools about their practice (Hart, 2012). Hart (2012) states that:

1.   mainstream schools should use a strengths-based model,
2.   teachers need to understand what resilience IS so they can provide for pupils' emotional and social needs more,
3.   they need to change their practice to reintegrate pupils with SEMH difficulties successfully and

4.   by accessing pupil voice, staff may be guided on how they can best do this.

Although these recommendations are targeted at mainstream schools, it is entirely relevant to Eleanor Smith School's context also. Schools have a duty to work with a strengths-based model, as so many of their pupils have been previously victims of a deficit model, labelling them with "disorders" that tell them they are the problem (Hart, 2012; Walker, Hart & Hanna, 2017; see Chapters One and Three). All staff, not just teachers, should have an awareness of the construct of resilience so that they can apply it throughout their everyday practice. They may be the one significant adult that has an impact on individual pupil's lives, as resilience research has repeatedly highlighted (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Hart & Heaver, 2013). If it is within their remit (which can vary nationally), the ultimate indicator of success for special schools is having the ability to reintegrate pupils into mainstream, inclusive education. Preparing pupils for world of work and life is the vision of Eleanor Smith School. Promoting children's resilience is a positive step in the right direction in achieving this goal. Finally, all schools can learn from their pupil's voices about how they can better support them. Pupils live a school's context – its ethos, practices and messages are experienced and interpreted by them daily. It is vitally important that children's lived experiences meet their needs.

Writing, Drawing, Interviews, Phenomenology and Metaphor
Hunter and Chandler (1999) and Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon and Chandler (2002) used a variety of creative approaches with adolescents in their research. In 2002, Hunter et al. report using a phenomenological approach across countries to investigate resilience in youths. Hunter and Chandler used mixed methods of free writing, structured and unstructured interviews and drawing, coupled with the Resiliency Scale (Wagnild & Young, 1993, in Hunter & Chandler, 1999) to elicit an understanding from adolescents of what being resilient is like. Results from the quantitative measure demonstrated that the adolescents in this sample identified themselves as resilient. However, they found results contrary to this in the qualitative data (Hunter & Chandler, 1999). From this research, these authors suggest a continuum of resilience where adolescents may be placed at various points. They used metaphor to try to make meaning from what participants had told them (Hunter & Chandler, 1999), describing it thus: "The adversities present in the lives of…[the] adolescents were represented by the storms of nature. The storm's approach, like adversities, might be subtle or sudden…The teens' reactions to adversity are similar to people's reactions during a storm. They can turn their backs until the worst is over, run away to find cover and protection, or run for their lives. The outcome of adversity…produces change. These changes may be temporary or permanent and may be hurtful or helpful" (Hunter et al., 2002, p.393). Hunter and Chandler (1999) state that they used this metaphor to communicate their findings to others, and to successfully impart the voices of the 300 adolescents involved in their study.

Expressive Arts Based Methods
Arts based methods with children with complex needs have the advantage of reducing anxiety and address many of the criticisms of quantitative research. Reasons for this are numerous:

1. They focus on capturing resilience, or at the very least, strengths, in children

2. They have the potential to be non-threatening and less anxiety provoking; there is no right or wrong
3. They are accessible, they do not rely solely on language or reading skills
4. They relate directly to kinaesthetic learning, a learning style that many children at SEMH schools prefer, especially children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
5. Working in small groups gives children the opportunity to develop social skills and practice using them
6. Visual arts can remove the focus from an individual and their responses
7. They are non-directive, so enable a more accurate picture of world views and experiences
8. The children participating may have fun and can develop a sense of belonging, discussing their school and their views
9. Self-esteem may be increased when the opportunity to share publicly is given

Kozlowska and Hanney (2001) list the benefits of using art group therapy for children as; it is pleasurable, children feel competence and hope, it allows them safe expression in a controllable situation, it helps them to detour some anxiety they may have experience mastering and integrating their feelings. In summary, they write "The authors propose that art allows for the symbolic representation of oneself and others… and allows for exposure to traumatic cues in a less direct manner, permitting anxiety to be tolerated and the unspeakable or unthinkable to be contemplated" (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2001, p.53). They contend that arts based approaches may be helpful in involving younger children whose language and expressive skills are limited (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2001).

Chosa and Tokelson Lynch (1996) concur with this view, writing that arts can give people with disabilities a sense of mastery, competence and self-esteem, where they may not have successful experiences academically, or in sports. Their research focused on developing life satisfaction in people with disabilities through being part of an expressive arts group (Chosa & Tokelson Lynch, 1996). To these researchers the process of producing the art was the important factor, not the end result. They found that as frequency and duration of engagement with the group increased so too did members' willingness to help others, a sense of pride developed and more effective communication became apparent. However, it is unclear what mechanism was having this impact; the process of using art itself, or small group activities.

In their work Lev-Wiesel and Liraz (2007) aimed to find to what extent "…the use of drawing prior to narrative description increases the richness of narrative given by children who are exposed to a succession of negative, often traumatic life events…" (p.66). They felt the strength of such an approach allowed children to express their experiences and emotional distress in acceptable ways, to communicate feelings and ideas, to explore and work through problems, and they were able to gain information about the children's perceptions of alliances, roles and stresses (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007). These researchers found that their participants who drew prior to talking gave more detailed and revealing narratives, expressed more negative emotion, had lower life appreciation and more optimism than the group who did not draw (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007). The non-drawing group demonstrated more resistance and splitting to the researchers (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007). These results did

not surprise the authors, as they contend that drawing enables the drawer to become a spectator to their own negative experience, such that they can then comment further on them (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007). Dolidze, Smith and Tchanturia (2013, p.476) alert researchers that interpretations of arts-based activities must be done *with* the child, writing "Interpretation is highly subjective therefore any inferences should be viewed as possible themes to be explored with the child". Heeding these considerations art has the potential to be a less threatening activity that opens up the opportunity to gain richer insight into children's lives and experiences.

As previously discussed, many children at Eleanor Smith School 'opt out' of anxiety provoking situations such as formal testing, utilising escape and avoidance type behaviours. Cautions were balanced against the potential opportunities when using some form of arts based approach (see Chapter Six). It should be noted that all children do not necessarily enjoy art, or find it non-threatening, and as such the possibility of children not engaging with arts based approaches is a real consideration. Overall, the above researchers all report that art acted as a conduit for traumatised children to be able to express themselves more fully and as a stimulus for verbalisation. Being able to share their views in a less threatening environment had the potential to produce richer, fuller data from the children and assisted me in framing their experiences and perceptions as accurately as possible.

Art and Mindfulness

A creative methodology of particular interest to me was that of Holistic Arts Based Practice (HABP). Coholic (2010, p.37) summarises the goal of HABP as "…the improvement of…resilience which we think of as basic building blocks of good mental health and wellness". The programme incorporated the use of arts-based activities with mindfulness. Coholic, Eys and Lougheed (2012, p.839) write that the purpose of including mindfulness in the HABP is to help children understand and tolerate any uncomfortable feelings that may arise during difficult discussions or sessions. The children that Coholic worked with had very similar difficulties to the children at Eleanor Smith School, such as being "…'anxious, withdrawn, apprehensive, and overly watchful,' some have 'quick tempers', and some are diagnosed with attention deficit disorder" (Coholic, Lougheed & Cadell, 2009). A benefit of using a mindfulness approach is the potential for it to act as a method of reducing the anxiety pupils may be feeling (Baer, 2007; Brown, Ryan & Creswell, 2007). Cautions regarding the use of mindfulness with children include it being based on Buddhist teachings and religion (Rosch, 2007), and the potential for some parents to object to their children being "taught" such techniques. A major consideration in this context was that pupils with SEMH find it difficult to sit and engage in activities for sustained periods of time (see Chapter Three). I therefore doubted mindfulness would be accessible to pupils as a method that would reduce anxiety and allow them to explore the research questions.

Having investigated less anxiety-invoking methodological options available for children with complex needs, I decided upon Body Mapping (BM), (see Chapter Six and Appendix Seven) as a technique. The method of BM (conducted with pupils) is outlined briefly in the following section, along with Collaborative Inquiry (CI), the method used with staff as collaborators. Fuller detail about each measure, participants (staff and pupils), procedures and analysis is given in Chapter Six, along with the quantitative methods used (scores of

social and emotional progress, school attendance, academic attainment feedback from a survey of staff).

Body Mapping

As a result of the above considerations, Body Mapping (BM) was used with pupils as an inclusive, qualitative methodology. BM (see Appendix Seven) is a creative method that pupils had prior experience of to elicit their thoughts and ideas about the school curriculum. This normalised the method and enabled pupils to feel relaxed and comfortable. It is a method of communicating feelings, thoughts and ideas that can provide biographical information (Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy, 2012). Using the technique to ascertain children's perceptions of their own wellbeing, Crivello et al (2009, p.66) describe BM as "…exploration using a common pictorial image of a body…of what makes children feel good or bad, where these feelings are located on their bodies, how they make themselves feel better and who, if anyone, helps them with this". They go on to state that BM is a group-based activity that may generate the recounting of experiences that can be discussed or followed up individually (Crivello et al., 2009). Crivello et al (2009) list the advantages of BM as; it is multifaceted and easy to use with children, it is a starting point to exploring key themes, it can identify diversity in experiences, and it is enjoyable. However, they also acknowledge the disadvantages as being; it necessitates active facilitation which may require some generalisation and it can sometimes be difficult to shift the focus of discussion from the negative to the positive (Crivello et al., 2009). I used Macpherson, Hart and Heaver's (2012; see Appendix Four) resilience measure questions to reframe and/or refocus an idea, along with the pictorial version of the RF (see Appendices Eight and Nine) alongside BM (see Chapter Six).

Collaborative Inquiry

The qualitative method used with staff was Collaborative Inquiry (CI). This method was chosen as the literature indicated it was conducted in the spirit of egalitarianism, participation and co-investigation; in alliance with my own values and researcher's assertions stated in Chapters Three and Four. Collaborative inquiry has been used as a tool to develop teacher practice in many areas of school life, and Huffman and Kalnin (2003, p.2) found the method "…helped [teachers] engage in a continuous improvement process that allowed them to take more ownership…and expand their role in their schools' decision-making processes". A driver behind my research was to leave the school with a sustainable legacy upon which it could act and develop practice independently (Hart and Heaver, 2013; see Chapter Three). An approach such as CI addresses this need, whereby staff share, learn and develop practice together in an open environment that is non-threatening and collegial. This was especially important given that a cross section of staff from all school roles were going to participate in the sessions, and a power imbalance could potentially be felt, for example, between the school cook and the head teacher.

Holmlund et al. (2008, p.3) write "We identified collaborative inquiry as a promising development tool, recognizing that teacher change is a complex process that requires time for reflection, discourse, questioning, practice, and feedback, rather than a one-time or short-time encounter with others' ideas". Tillema and van der Westhuizen (2006) support this, stating that collaborative inquiry has the potential to enhance teachers' professional growth and to create meaningful, positive shifts in practice. It is an opportunity for staff to

share theories and ideas and to practice them. Overall, Tillema and van der Westhuizen (2006) found CI to be a powerful shared learning tool for professionals to work together on common problems.

Burnard, Craft, Cremin, Duffy, Hanson, Keene and…Burns (2006) also used a CI approach to develop teacher practice when encouraging "possibility thinking" in young children. They found this approach allowed teachers to reflect on their practice and it was used as a tool to develop teachers' professional knowledge (Burnard et al., 2006). CI also answers Hart and Heaver's (2013) call for capacity building in those who are attempting to build resilience in children – staff are able to reflect on what is or is not working effectively for their pupils and to experiment with strategies.

The CI approach also provided a forum to specifically answer the research questions (see Appendices Five and Six) collectively. We wanted to understand how staff used the RF to support resilience in their pupils, along with identifying any barriers to this. These meetings were supported by the reflective action research cycle discussed in Chapters Four and Six. I anticipated that the research questions could be answered through the process of abstraction outlined in Chapter Four, using the action research cycle (see Figure 6.1; Chapter Six). Stalker (1998) highlights the importance of gaining understanding from participants themselves, writing "It is now widely accepted that individuals are the best authority over their own lives, experiences, feelings and views" (p.5). Collective questioning would elucidate a picture of what it was exactly that staff did to support resilience of their pupils.

Using a CI approach with teachers Holmlund et al. (2008, p.20) found that "By working as a collaborative group conducting inquiry…we were able to experience the very processes that we were asking of project teachers". Having staff and pupils as collaborators also addresses the lack of participatory approaches being used in resilience research, as discussed at the outset of this work, and expressed by Hart and Heaver (2013). One of the defining aspects of this school's use of the RF is that it used a whole school approach, incorporating all staff, regardless of role or area of responsibility. This is in recognition of the resilience literature base that highlights the importance of any adult having the potential to be the one significant person in a child's life who can have a particular impact on them (Murray Nettles, Mucherah & Jones, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1989). Consequently, it was vital that a cross section of staff, working in various roles were members of the CI group (see Chapter Six).

Reflexivity and Rigour

Researchers such as Gilgun (2006), Holmlund et al. (2008), and McEvoy and Richards (2006) all warn that the transparency of the generated knowledge and its limitations must be acknowledged. Such acknowledgement means colleagues are able to make informed decisions about the reliability, validity and generalizability of its findings. Madhill et al. (2000, p.10) state "Articulation of researcher perspective may be utilized in a more realist analysis, although it will fulfil a different function consistent with that epistemology, e.g. to help researchers lay aside their 'biases'". They go on to write that it is the researcher's responsibility to relay participants' accounts accurately, alongside examining their own relationship to the data (Madhill et al., 2000). Greenhalgh and Taylor (1997) support this, asserting that it is inconceivable for interviews to be conducted by someone with no views, ideological or cultural perspectives. They assert that the most that can be required of the

researchers is for them to provide detailed, open descriptions of where they are coming from so that the results can be interpreted accordingly (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).

In order to make the data as accurate and transparent as possible, Cheek (1999, p.385) recommends "…researchers to engage in a form of reflexivity, in which the analysis of practice involves multiple layers, multiple truths, and multiple voices". This recommendation encourages researchers to view their own beliefs in the same way as they view those held by those being researched. Being challenged and open to multiple interpretations, not only that of my own, but of others, and giving them equal weighting, was important assuring the trustworthiness of the final data presented. Using a co-analyst assisted me in achieving this. I have reported influences and what has shaped my perspectives as a researcher in Chapters One, Two and Four, in particular. I re-refer to limitations in Chapter Nine.

Bhaskar urges us to "…pay particular attention to the reasons given by people for their actions" (Houston, 2001, p.854). It must be acknowledged that perceptions are open to distortions. Danermark et al. (2002) highlight the importance of this to a critical realist approach, writing that knowledge not only has meaning, it has differing meanings to those contributing to and using it. I adhere to Lusardi's (Hunter et al., 2002, p.389) contention that "Key to meaning making in qualitative work is an awareness of one's own worldview and perspectives while in dialogue with persons in their natural setting". van Heugten (2004) concurs with this, asserting that the inclinations and limitations of researchers influence the way they initially conceptualise research problems and how they subsequently approach them. I was conscious of attempting to put my perceptions aside as much as possible, and to cross check the interpretations I made of the data with the co-analyst and staff and pupils through a process of being challenged and questioned. I re-presented the themes found in the data to participants (staff and pupils) for confirmation or reframing of accuracy. Doing so, I could at least begin to purport the trustworthiness of my findings.

I held in mind that knowledge is fallible and open to interpretation; it was important to feedback the initial data analysis to staff and pupils to confidently portray an accurate picture. Checking the themes that emerged from the BM and CI data was important to maintain a truly collaborative approach to this research throughout (Nind, 2008; Stalker, 1998). I held to van Heugten's (2004) recommendation of keeping guidance to a minimum in mind. In their guide to ethical practice, Banks, Armstrong, Carter, Graham, Hayward and Henry (2012, p.12) suggest "…in writing up, the iterative process of developing drafts, incorporating new insights and amendments from all participants is an important part of the learning experience"; Swain et al. (1998) concur.

Hewitt-Taylor (2002, p.34) recommends using a journal to support evaluating the effects of a researcher's values and beliefs on the data gathered, writing "I identified and recorded these [personal values and beliefs] and my perception of my position and relationships in the organisation with those involved in the study. This enabled me to evaluate the possible effects of these on the data gathered and in relation to specific events". This caution was especially pertinent to me, given I was situated as an insider. At each data collection stage I entered my perceptions and interpretations into the research journal I had, along with re-reading my notes at the end of the CI meetings to re-check accuracy of the meanings made.

I also de-briefed after each session with the co-analyst. She acted as 'devil's advocate' and challenged me to explain my interpretations in the inverse, for example. A useful question posed by the co-analyst was "Tell me how you know it isn't… [the exact opposite of what you are portraying to me]".

Insider Research

As previously mentioned, I had held a role in the school as a member of staff for 11 years, the last six of which were as a senior leader. There are implications for this research of my relationship with the school. As van Heugten (2004, p.207) writes "The selection of a topic that clearly reflects personal interest and the selection of colleagues as subjects raise the spectre of insider 'bias'". Mercer (2007) writes about the insider and outsider doctrine, whereby the latter can stand back and survey conditions with less prejudice. However, on the contrary, Mercer (2007) states that the insider is able to comprehend and understand the world that they are researching with more insight. Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p.69) argue that "When they [insider researchers] are inquiring, they can use the internal jargon, draw on their own experience in asking questions and interviewing, be able to follow up on replies, and so obtain richer data". Conversely, having an insider as the researcher could contribute to restricting their participants' responses and frankness being impacted upon. It is essential that the limitations of this research are openly stated and can withhold scrutiny.

Advantages of being close to this research include having an insight into the pupils' context. It gave me credibility in the school to be someone who understood what it can be like to work with children with complex needs. Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p.60) support this, writing "We are arguing that as researchers through a process of reflexive awareness, we are able to articulate tacit knowledge that has become deeply segmented because of socialization in an organizational system and reframe it as theoretical knowledge and that because we are close to something to know it well, that we can research it". van Heugten (2004) goes on to state that the positivist ideals of objectivity and detachment are sometimes not possible, or even desirable, in some research and that personal experiences and imaginative identification are now recognised as valid "…sources of scholarly knowledge" (van Heugten, 2004, p.207). However, a disadvantage of being closely tied with the school is that personal and professional relationships may have undermined my neutrality as a researcher. I subsequently needed to be alert to personal biases and expecting to uncover findings about which I already had predetermined assumptions. There was the potential for a 'double insider' bias to exist within this research, as one of the supervisors of the work was an originator of the approach it was exploring (see Chapter Nine).

It was therefore important to use a technique with pupils whereby they had more control of the meanings offered and made, along with participating in the CI as a collaborator, not as *the researcher* (for particular reference to how this worked during the data collection phase, refer to Chapter Six). It would have been unrealistic to pretend to be impartial with people I had worked closely with over a long period of time. We had a shared understanding of the school's pupils. As the nature of the research was exploratory and inductive it was crucial when forming an understanding from pupils that I made clear to them that there were no right or wrong answers and what may be the experiences and views of one pupil or member of staff would not necessarily be the case for another.

Interestingly, in a personal communication with Hannah Macpherson (2012), she stated that whilst developing the self-evaluative measure of resilience (Appendix Four), she found that having a relationship of trust was an advantage in this context, whereby children may be more forthcoming with their answers than with a stranger. I have alluded to the potential of staff and pupils answering me in a way they think may be favourable, in the triangulation section of this Chapter. At the outset of the research, and with regular reminders, it was made clear that the purpose of the research was to uncover experiences of Eleanor Smith School, attempting to embed resilience-based practice. To have confidence that the findings were valid, honesty of responses and reflexivity of the data was crucial.

Being aware of these issues is why I specifically wanted to uncover the children's and staff's worlds using a collaborative approach. My own values and beliefs about and for these children and the staff had clearly shaped my methodological choices. I had been frustrated in the past by pupils' exclusion from society and their not having a voice. Huffman and Kalnin (2003, p.21) found using collaborative inquiry assisted teachers to make "…the data their own, as was the solution". This would help to alleviate biases I may have brought to the research. This type of ownership (for staff and pupils alike) of the outcomes of an inquiry serve to ensure sustainability. Huffman and Kalnin (2003, p.17) write "When describing barriers to the process, the most general concern was how teams were to carry out the work of the project independently once the series of workshops ended". My research design specifically sought to empower staff to enable continuance of collaboration and professional learning, upon completion of the research itself. It also empowered them to make strategic decisions for the school's future and school improvement priorities, in accordance with a critical realist position, as evidenced by the thematic analysis of the qualitative data and statistical analysis of the quantitative data, to be discussed.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the importance of mixed methods research in imparting as much accuracy as possible to the reporting of others' experiences and the meanings made of these. This was informed by a critical realist epistemology, of existing differing experiences, whilst sharing a common reality; coupled with a methodology that upholds inclusion and using the methods that "best fit" researching and supporting the potential for change. Mixed quantitative and qualitative methods were used, which attempted to depict the facilitators of, and barriers to supporting resilience in the pupils. In the spirit of co-collaboration and action research, they were used in an attempt to leave a legacy of knowledge that empowers school members to change and act on that knowledge; with the ultimate goal of school ownership, transformation and sustainability (see Chapters Three and Four). The potential pitfalls and advantages of being positioned firmly within this research as an insider have been explored. I feel personally and professionally comfortable with being an insider researcher, especially given the collaborative approach taken. This could still, of course, be seen as a limitation to the data analysis, and I have outlined how I may have potentially, even if unwittingly, influenced this in Chapter Nine. The following Chapter outlines in detail each method used, both qualitative and quantitative, exploring the participants, procedure and analysis used respectively.

Chapter Six: Accessing Perceptions and Lived Experiences

Introduction

Specific reference is now made to each of the methods used in this work. Mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative approaches are adopted. An overview of each instrument is presented, and details of the participants, how they were chosen, the groups they came from and their roles in the school are all shared (where applicable). See Table 6.2 for a timeline of data sources and participants for each method used throughout the research. How each method was used procedurally is described, along with how the data that emerged from each was managed and interpreted. The participatory ethos of the qualitative methods is highlighted, framed within an action research methodology. First, the quantitative methods are outlined, followed by the qualitative approaches. (Note, 12 pupils out of a total roll of 50 were included in this research due to their being the largest same-age group enrolled at the time).

Quantitative Methods

Instrument: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

As part of its existing practice, the school used the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire ((SDQ) Goodman, 1997 in Hall, 2010; Appendix Two) at the beginning and end of each academic year to measure the social and emotional progress made by pupils. The SDQ is a 25 item brief behavioural screening questionnaire that asks respondents to give one of four ratings to each item, on five sub-scores; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour (www.SDQinfo.org). Pupils come out with one of four scores; ranging from no concern to severe concern. Stone, Otten, Rutger, Vermulst and Janssens (2010, p.274) write that "The SDQ proves to be a good screening instrument, with high sensitivity and specificity for the total difficulties and impact scales. The percentage of children correctly identified by the SDQ as having a disorder is high, as is the percentage of children correctly identified by the SDQ as not having a disorder". In her review of resilience measures in childhood, Hall (2010) did not find any that were adequately strong psychometrically. She did, however, find measures of factors that contribute toward resilience, such as strengths and emotional and behavioural skills, which were valid (Hall, 2010).

Reassuringly, the SDQ was rated as having "…good psychometric properties…" by Hall (2010, p.12). Stone et al. (2010, p.254) concur, writing "This review shows that the psychometric properties of the SDQ are strong, particularly for the teacher version". Internal consistency was reported by Stone et al. (2010) as 0.82, inter-rater agreement between teachers and parents 0.44, and test-retest reliability at 0.84. Concurrent validity with the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach, 1991, in Stone et al., 2010) was reported to be 0.76, while Hawes and Dadds (2004) found inter-rater reliability with the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Adolescents and Parents (DISCAP) to be 100% agreement on externalising disorders and 0.87 for internalising disorders. They go on to state "The results showed evidence of predictive validity, as SDQ scores predicted help seeking for psychosocial problems over a year" (Stone et al., 2010, p.274).

The SDQ also measures some strengths related to resilience, such as social relationships (Hall, 2010). I used the school's SDQ data, to triangulate staff and pupil's views of the

children's social and emotional progress, before and after the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) and Body Mapping (BM) phases of the research. Teachers were responsible for completing the SDQs for all pupils in their class. Use of this method provided data to triangulate perceptions of positive outcomes for pupils over the course of a year. SDQ scores are a source of evidence that the school used to reintegrate pupils into their mainstream schools. An improvement in SDQ score was a positive outcome for the pupil and evidence of their social and emotional needs being met and enhanced.

SDQ Participants

SDQs were completed for the 12 pupils involved in the BM sessions (see relevant section that follows).

SDQ Procedure

Teachers completed the SDQ on-line version (see www.SDQinfo.org) for each pupil twice yearly. Print outs of the final scores were compiled for school recording purposes. This occurred in May 2013 and again in May 2014, in line with when they were completed in the school's annual calendar.

SDQ Analysis

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to measure changes in SDQ scores over time. The shift in means was calculated for both classes and compared between time 1 (May 2013) and time 2 (May 2014). The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to ascertain if there was a significant change – either a deterioration, or improvement in SDQ scores that would indicate changes in pupils' social and behavioural progress. The means were calculated to determine the average progress across time of both classes (means Table 7.1 and scores pre and post RF implementation Figure 7.1; see Chapter Seven & Appendix Ten).

Instrument: Attendance Records

At the time of conducting the research, the school's overall attendance by all pupils (not just the small group involved in this research) was 87% - 9% below the national expectation. The member of staff responsible for monitoring attendance was invited to join the CI group, with the intention of staff developing shared strategies to raise attendance using the Resilience Framework ((RF), Hart, Blincow and Thomas, 2007). An increase in pupil attendance is a positive outcome (see Chapters Two and Three), if it was poor before implementing the RF. Attendance was recorded for all pupils pre-RF implementation, and then again upon completion of the data collection.

School attendance figures show the number of sessions a pupil on roll was able to attend, totalling 100% within any given timeframe, along with the number of sessions missed due to reasons as explicit as medical appointments, being excluded or family holidays taken. 100% is considered to be excellent attendance. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) judge schools on attendance figures, and a school has to have an overall attendance figure of 96% to gain an outstanding judgement in that aspect (see Chapter Ten).

Attendance Participants
The attendance of all 12 pupils involved in the BM was recorded pre and post RF implementation. In total, 12 pupils were present over the course of these 13 months, and their attendance statistics are presented in Table 7.2 (see Chapter Seven & Appendix Eleven).

Attendance Procedure
Attendance figures were collected for all participants - with the exception of Elizabeth, who had left the school prior to completion of full data collection. Attendance was measured directly from the school's administrative records, for which the programme Schools Information Management (SIMs) was used. The attendance data from SIMs was taken in July 2013 (pre-RF) and again in March 2014 (post RF).

Attendance Analysis
A t test was used to measure the statistical significance of attendance data (see Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2; see Chapter Seven & Appendix Eleven), pre and post implementation of the RF, along with calculating the mean attendance for both classes at each respective time period. This t test was completed to demonstrate whether there had been a statistically significant shift in pupil attendance between time one (July 2013) and time two (March 2014). An improvement in means would indicate that, although the shift may not have been statistically significant, some impact on pupil attendance could still be demonstrated, either positively or negatively, if at all. The findings are discussed fully in Chapter Nine.

Instrument: Academic Attainment
Attainment Participants
Attainment data was collected for all 12 pupils in the research. It should be noted, however, that during the data collection, four out of the 12 pupils involved in the research had reintegrated into mainstream (two) or left the borough (two) (see Figure 7.3 & Chapter Seven).

Attainment Procedure
Pupils' academic attainment data for English and maths was measured in July 2013 (pre-RF implementation) and compared with their data in July 2014 (post RF implementation).

Attainment Analysis
Attainment levels were compared between July 2013 and July 2014. These levels were expressed by a national system of 'sub levels' at the time. National expectations are that all pupils make two sub levels' progress per academic year. This could look like; Autumn 2013 English 1C: Autumn 2014 English 1A, whereby a pupil has achieved the two sub level expectation, progressing from 1C, moving on to 1B and arriving at level 1A within an academic year. Table 7.3 illustrates pupils' academic attainment data, presented in Chapter Seven.

Mixed Methods

Instrument: "Resilience-based Practice" Pre-Audit and Post Research Surveys

The school's self-evaluation audit (see Appendix Three), was completed in October 2012, prior to this research commencing. The head teacher had developed the audit, which was entitled 'Resilience-based Practice Audit' and was used as a baseline to gain insight into staff confidence levels of using and applying the concept of resilience with pupils in their daily practice. It was also intended to signpost the varying training needs staff may have in the field. The format of the audit was a closed rating scale, asking staff to rate their confidence in understanding and using the RF in their practice. It took the form of a 5 point Likert ranking ranging from not at all, to average, to very confident (see Chapter Seven). Open ended questions followed to elicit further views from staff, giving them the opportunity to comment further on issues that may have affected their practice. The responses to these questions are presented in Chapter Eight.

Staff re-completed the audit, post RF implementation (October 2014), now entitled 'Resilience-based Practice Survey', however with the same content, (see Appendix Three). Each respondent to the audit and survey generated a total score, before and after implementation of the Framework. I was interested in what staff already understood about the concept of resilience, and what they did not feel as confident with. Unfortunately, due to using the pre-existing audit data which had already been completed anonymously, I was unable to compare individual staff member's responses directly in the survey data. Doing so would have allowed presentation of individual staff confidence ratings, over time. This limitation is discussed more fully in Chapter Nine.

In order to assert as much as possible that their confidence in using and applying the concept of resilience was what was being measured in the survey questions, I ran Cronbach's alpha, which indicated an overall internal consistency of 0.918. A Cronbach's alpha of .9 or above is considered to be "excellent" (Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p.87). Given a satisfactory alpha score indicating internal consistency of questions on such scales is .8, I was content that the questions related to each other sufficiently well (see Chapter Seven).

Survey Participants

All teaching and support staff working in the school before the research's inception completed the audit (n=25). Again, all teaching and support staff completed the survey (n=28) at the end of the research period.

Survey Procedure

Staff completed the audit and the survey anonymously (see above) at the end of the school day, in a scheduled, de-briefing meeting. They were completed without discussion and handed to a senior member of staff for collation.

Survey Analysis

A mean score was calculated for each question on the audit/survey (see Chapter Seven and Appendix Twelve). Responses on the open ended audit/survey questions were analysed by me and the co-analyst using thematic analysis (see Chapter Eight).

Qualitative Methods

Instrument: Collaborative Inquiry

Being consistent with my epistemological position of attempting to understand the bi-directional and complex relationship between people's internal and external worlds, I ran a collaborative inquiry (CI) group, including myself as a collaborator (see Chapter Five). This group ran from September to December 2013. All staff were asked to volunteer to be part of the CI group, and a large positive response was received, with 21 (of a possible 28) submitting their names. The members were chosen, on the basis of trying to achieve as much of a representative cross section of staff as possible. As Ramani, Orlander, Strunin and Barber (2003) found in their research with teachers in hospitals, a limitation of their study was that their "…findings represent only the teachers' perspective and not that of housestaff or students" (p.390). The nature of this representation of the whole school staff was the driving force behind mine and the head teacher's final selection of CI group members. Perceived willingness to use the RF, school experience or confidence with pupils were not used as 'selection criteria'. This group was initiated after Professor Angie Hart, a developer of the Resilience Framework (RF) had completed a whole staff training session on implementing the RF in practice in December 2012.

Collaborative Inquiry Participants

The CI group involved in this research had twelve members. It consisted of a cook, a cleaner, a lunchtime supervisor, a support worker, teachers, senior leaders (myself included) and the head teacher. Staff were offered extra pay or time in lieu for any additional working hours membership in the group may have incurred for them. Having previous knowledge of the school, the head teacher and I invited 16 members of staff to participate in these meetings. Twelve of these 16 members of staff agreed to commit to the meetings, with ten of them participating in at least two out of three CI sessions.

Collaborative Inquiry Procedure

The collaborative inquiry was voice recorded, after having sought permission from group members and approval from the University of Brighton's Faculty of Research Ethics and Governing Committee (FREGC). I did this so that the co-analyst and I could reflect upon and give as accurate a portrayal of staff thoughts as possible. I also recorded the sessions via note taking. At the end of each session, I read my notes aloud to group members to immediately check the accuracy of my recording, and to ensure that I had gained a precise insight into their meaning. The discussions held within the CI remained confidential within that group, and subsequent written work from the meetings used pseudonyms so that group members' identities were protected.

A key issue that I predicted before beginning the CI sessions was the uniqueness this type of group or meeting may have for support and ancillary staff. I thought that, due to being unfamiliar with participating in meetings such as this, they may feel less comfortable and confident about contributing to the discussions than teaching or leadership staff. This may have contributed to feelings of a power imbalance. I used the Ofsted (2010; Chapter Five) quote (hung on the wall at every meeting), along with reiterating the importance of one significant adult in a child's life. This reinforced Werner and Smith's (1989) pioneering work in the field of identifying protector factors for children, where they state "Some had a favorite teacher who became a role model, friend and confidant for them" (p.74) (with

which they were all familiar from using the RF), to attempt to reduce the potential feeling of role division between staff.

I wanted CI group members to feel and live the ethos of participatory action research. This was reinforced throughout the meetings by members of staff, with all contributing to the discussions and validating and challenging each other, regardless of their role in the school. When reflecting on the transcripts however, it was apparent that in terms of content, the ancillary staff, along with the support worker, contributed less content and participated with less frequency than other group members. This may indicate a tentativeness on their part to contribute. It may also, however, be an accurate portrayal of what they felt they wanted to, and could, contribute. It is also possible that senior leaders or more confident staff dominated the discussions. I acknowledge this limitation further in Chapter Nine.

Considering the criticisms raised in Chapter Five regarding insider research, I planned to openly discuss with collaborative inquiry group members that they may not feel that they could be as open and frank as they may be if I were not part of the group, or if they could answer research questions in a more anonymous manner. It should also be acknowledged that contributions made by members of staff seen traditionally as 'lower' on the school hierarchy may have been impacted by the presence of the head teacher and senior leaders in the group. The head teacher spontaneously addressed this concern before I had the opportunity to do so at the outset of the first meeting, saying

> *"I think we should be honest about our thoughts"*

when the initial ground rules were being agreed. I went on to say

> *"I've gone away and trawled the literature from all around the world and there is no school that I can find that has involved ALL staff from any role in its research so far…Lots of schools generally involve teachers and support workers…the really exciting thing about this for me is…that everyone's opinion is valued and appreciated and there's no hierarchy in this room".*

To demonstrate the egalitarian principles behind this research I directed group members' attention to the above Ofsted (2010) quote at the beginning of Chapter Five to further reiterate my point about the value of everyone in our school and their potential to be the one significant adult in pupils' lives. Group members chuckled at this and smiled and nodded in agreement.

My concern that all group members felt their contributions had equal weight was alleviated when the first person to speak after the small group discussions was the school cook. Not only was she the first person to speak, she talked about our working together as a team, saying

> *"I think that they way that we are working as a team, it's going to make a lot of difference because there are so many things that you will know and as we are meeting together, it's going to help us change so many things…"*

The space that CI meetings took place in was a room in the school where teaching staff typically had professional dialogue and meetings, as part of their daily practice. The ancillary staff involved in the CI group had never been invited to participate in meetings such as this previously. The table was oval shaped, with matching chairs set around it, and large sheets of paper stuck up to the walls around the room to record ground rules, the Action Research (AR) cycle (see Figure 6.1 below), and the initial research questions we were going to explore (see Appendix Five), along with additional sheets for other contributions made that we wished to refer to throughout our discussions. These same sheets were displayed in the room for every subsequent CI meeting. To give the meetings a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere I ensured that drinks and food were available on the table, hopefully indicating the value and importance of these meetings, along with the difference they held compared to other school-based meetings.

At the beginning of every CI meeting, the ground rules were agreed and set, these being:

- All members have the opportunity to contribute and an equal voice
- All members respect each other's opinions
- Confidentiality of discussion to be maintained within the group and only information that is agreed to be shared outside of the meeting is to be discussed with other members of staff, who are not members of the CI group – for example, if actions were agreed to involve others
- All members encouraged to be as open and honest in expressing their views as possible
- The right to withdraw from the group at any time, without having to furnish a reason.

These ground rules were scribed and displayed on one of the large sheets of paper already hung on the wall for members to refer to throughout the meetings.

The AR cycle was outlined to group members at the outset of the first meeting as the model we would use to inform our practice when using the RF in the school. I was aware that a CI group member had previously completed a Master's Degree dissertation using an AR approach herself and had discussed with this member her willingness to share with co-members how this had worked during her research. I thought that this would be one way of demonstrating to group members that although I was facilitating the meetings initially, I was committed to involving them as my co-researchers. I wanted them to see the nature and ethos behind co-produced, participatory research, where there is no 'expert', and everyone's contributions are valued and accepted. At the beginning of the first meeting, I stated

> *"It's about us being researchers together. It's not about me doing my PhD and coming in and having all the answers and being the expert because I'm certainly not, I'm learning as I go as well and I really do value people's opinions, like G was saying because there'll be things that I've never thought of that have never crossed my mind, you guys will all have different ideas in ways we can take the school forward and looking at resilience with the kids".*

The member of staff agreed to discuss her experience and understanding of the AR process, and as she outlined to group members the process of AR and how she had used it, I scribed this onto a large sheet of paper on the wall to depict visually (see Figure 6.1)

1. Diagnosis – naming the issues
2. Planning action
3. Taking some action
4. Evaluating the action

The first AR question was discussed in mixed groups of three or four staff, coming from various roles across the school. I had already pre-determined membership of these groups to ensure a cross section of staff member by role in each. I used this format because I thought members may feel more comfortable discussing their ideas in smaller groups, which could be shared later with the larger group. I interpreted this to have been successful, as when we came back together to share our ideas, the first person to speak was the cook – typically seen in a school as being at the 'bottom' of the hierarchy, in terms of financial reward for labour and often depicted as such in school staff displays in foyers. In response to each research question, the groups recorded their views on note paper and then stuck these up onto the large sheets of paper on the wall (see Appendix Six). I also took short notes during the sessions and read these back to staff at the conclusion of each CI meeting. Upon completion of each session, the co-analyst and I also discussed these. I further recorded what staff had written on their notes attached to the sheets on the wall to be able to reflect on them afterwards. I did this in case the transcripts of discussions did not represent all of the content that they had recorded. I found later that they did.
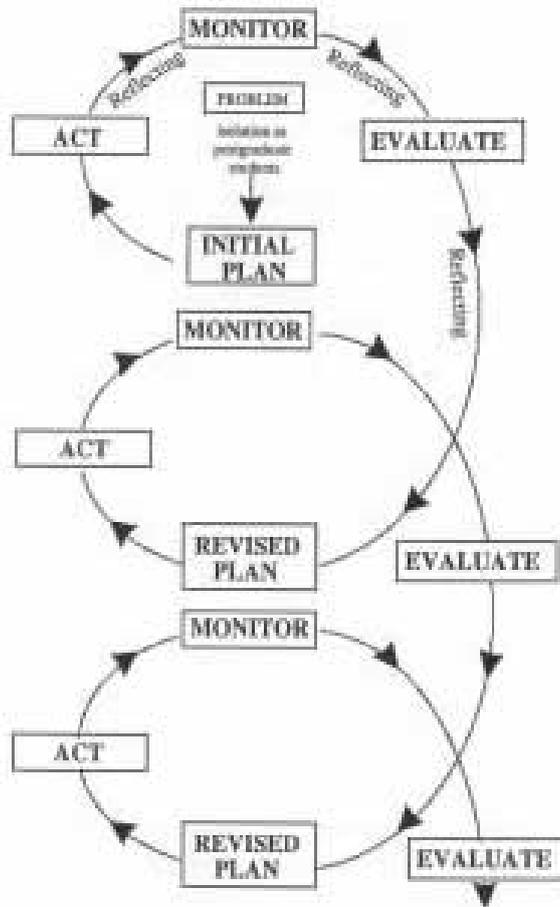
Figure 6.1: Visual Depiction of Action Research Model Used in Collaborative Inquiry Meetings

Source: http://www.eioba.com/a/1hzj/action-research-and-social-software-adopting-technology-in-schools

Group members were presented with the following research questions, written on the wall:
1. Does using the RF get better results/outcomes for our pupils?
2. What do we do to build resilience in our schools?
3. What stops us from developing resilience?

They were then asked to explore them together as a group.

Collaborative Inquiry Analysis

The data from CI meetings was analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) and interpreted by both myself and a member of the collaborative inquiry group (the co-analyst, see Chapter Five), who independently reviewed the open ended staff audit/survey questions, collaborative inquiry and body mapping transcripts. The role of the analyst was described to the CI group at the end of the first session, alongside what would be involved in supporting the data analysis. Interested parties were asked to volunteer for this role from the CI group. Only one person expressed interest and confidence to do so. She was a fellow senior leader and had worked in education for over 30 years. She was employed as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SenCo) at the time of conducting the research. Her role in the school was to ensure the interventions met the inclusion needs of all pupils. She had

had no previous experience in formal research. The second analyst had been part of the CI and an on-going 'champion' of resilience with staff and pupils, especially as a senior leader of inclusion, so was comfortable with what resilience was and how it could be supported. If, however, she had doubt about whether an idea or suggestion from staff "counted" as a theme, we argued for or against the concept bi-directionally until we reached agreement. Re-checking our interpretations with staff (and pupils after Body Mapping) increased the confidence we had in the accuracy of the data. If the strategy identified could not be related back to the resilience research field it was discarded, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006).

TA is described by Aronson (1994) as focusing on themes and patterns of living or behaviour. Aronson goes on to write "Themes that emerge from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience" (1994, p.1). Sub-themes emerge from the data that form a comprehensive view, or a whole picture. She recommends that once themes have been identified it is good practice to obtain feedback from participants about their accuracy (Aronson, 1994). This process was completed with both the CI and BM transcripts, once the second analyst and I had done the initial readings. Aronson (1994) also recommends that once themes have been agreed, a valid argument for their existence should be built by relating them back to the literature. She writes "Once the themes have been collected and the literature has been studied, the researcher is ready to formulate theme statements to develop a story line" (Aronson, 1994, p.2).

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that a benefit of using TA to analyse qualitative data is its flexibility that can be applied, regardless of epistemological position, whereby the researcher actively makes decisions about themes that are identified. TA can be used within a critical realist approach to understanding meaning because it acknowledges how individuals make meaning of their experience, and how the broader social context may impact upon doing so (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, TA can be used to look at surface meaning, along with deeper detail in the meaning of data (see Chapter Four). Braun and Clarke (2006, p.10, emphasis in the original) define a theme as capturing "…something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set". They go on to write that the frequency with which a theme is repeated in a data set is not important, but rather, the importance lies with the theme's place within relevant literature and its significance to the research questions. The consistency with which themes are identified is key to maintaining a rich overall description of the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

We identified themes that are strongly linked to the data itself – an inductive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This decision was made based on the desire to capture any themes that may not already relate to the Framework or to current practice, which had not yet been named. This allowed for identification of facilitators of and barriers against supporting resilience in pupils, as Aronson (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend. An open-minded approach to possible facilitators of and barriers to developing resilience allowed for new themes to emerge that could inform future practice, in accordance with an AR approach. Resilience research outlines to lay people, professionals and academics alike what protective factors may work together to enhance a child's life, as discussed in the literature review portion of this thesis. However, it may have been possible to discover that certain

factors worked in some instances for particular pupils. This would not only be supported by previous literature, but would also inform future research subsequent to this thesis being completed.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also outline the importance of analysts determining whether to identify latent or semantic themes. This is in line with searching for themes that may support or dispute current literature. Given the paucity of resilience research in this field I made this decision, asserting that using a semantic approach may identify themes that further contribute to or challenge existing literature. Braun and Clarke (2006) warn that TA must be linked to a theoretical framework, without which the resultant themes would be called into question. The epistemological position and resilience theory base (see Chapters Three and Four) were both used to support the development of these themes. This supports a critical realist approach, as Braun and Clarke (2006, p.14) write: "…with a[n] realistic approach, you can theorise motivations, experience and meaning in a straight-forward way, because a simple, unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language". For example, before embarking upon the data collection, along with knowing the ethos of the school as an insider researcher as I did, I would not have been surprised if staff and pupils commented on the importance of relationships within the school, along with their role in supporting and developing resilience. Although it must be acknowledged that this may not, in fact, have even been mentioned as a theme.

The process of TA used was an iterative one, with an initial reading, themes highlighted, transcripts exchanged between myself and the co-analyst and re-read independently for themes to be identified. After this independent reading of one transcript by each analyst, the pupils and staff involved in the BM and CI groups respectively were asked their opinions about the themes, to validate or challenge the analysts' interpretations. The RF headings and strategies were used as initial guidance for theme identification, and if any other data item emerged that seemed to be answering the research question this was included as a theme. The RF headings and strategies, for example "sense of belonging" ((SB) Hart et al. 2007, p.113) and "foster interests" ((FI) Hart et al. 2007, p.68) were used as initial codes. Any codes that there seemed to be no pre-existing label for were given one by the two analysts, with a description of what it indicated, and a coding agreed for it. For example, use of the school's behaviour policy came up as an item that needed coding, and appeared to be a strong theme in the CI transcripts, so the analysts agreed the code for this item, BP. The codes that appeared to have a relationship were then combined to form a theme.

As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), any themes that did not have enough data to support them were discarded, along with data that did not answer the research questions. A process of re-coding took place also. This was essential because where new codes had to be generated that did not appear to fit the RF, both analysts had to interpret and agree and code these. With the Behaviour Policy code, for example, I immediately considered this to be an example of "Understanding boundaries" on the RF (Hart et al., 2007, p.108, while the second analyst viewed it differently. After discussion, reviewing the data again and sharing it with the CI group to gain their views, it was agreed that the data items may be better described as Behaviour Policy (within Boundaries, see Chapter Eight).

We took Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.22) advice when going through this process, where they write "It is important that by the end of this phase you can clearly define what your themes are, and what they are not. One test for this is to see whether you can describe the scope and content of each theme in a couple of sentences". The group acted on this advice and together defined Behaviour Policy as "Strategies that are used by the staff in direct line with the school's agreed behaviour policy". (These, of course, naturally fall within the Boundaries strategy of the RF, which states "Understanding the boundaries and keeping within them" (Hart et al., 2007, p.108)).

The TA approach of Braun and Clarke (2006) was used by both analysts, following this format:

Phase	Description of the Process
1.Familiarising yourself with the data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading data, noting down initial ideas. *Completed by myself initially, then second analyst independent of me. Paired discussion about initial impressions then took place.*
2.Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. *Completed independently by both analysts.*
3.Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. *Completed jointly, in discussion, to agree themes*
4.Reviewing themes	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis. *Themes presented to the CI with analysts' rationale to seek consensus of meaning*
5.Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme. *Following Step 4, completed with CI group collaboratively*
6.Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing scholarly report of the analysis. *Chosen by both analysts and agreement finalised of examples and extracts to include in final report back to the school and PhD Thesis*

Table 6.1 Braun and Clarke's (2006) Phases of Thematic Analysis

Instrument: Body Mapping
A Body Map outline that was used with pupils is attached as Appendix Seven for reference.

Body Mapping Participants
The Body Mapping (BM) sessions were held over three consecutive weeks, with two classes of five and seven pupils, respectively. Of these 12 pupils, 11 were male and one was female. They ranged in age from eight to ten. The identified ethnic backgrounds of these children (as identified on the school's data storage programme, SIMs) were; five White British, two Asian, two Black African, one White Caribbean and, one African Caribbean and one White Other.

Initially, seven pupils in each class were involved, however, two of these 14 – two from one class – reintegrated into their mainstream schools on a fulltime basis after the first BM session. Their data was included in the research, as it was relevant to the research questions. However, their attendance and follow up SDQ data was unavailable at the end of the research (see Chapter Seven). Their return to their mainstream schools on a fulltime

basis during the course of the research, is indicative of their developmental needs being addressed and met, along with a reduction of the concerns they were referred to the school for initially. In Chapter Eight, where pupils' names are referred to, pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality.

Body Mapping Procedure

Prior to the research commencing, I piloted the body mapping exercise with three pupils in the summer term of 2013 (July), whereby I carried out a mock session with them. I told pupils I wanted to investigate with them if this was an easy way of talking to, or showing adults what they wanted to express. This allowed me to determine the time one session would take and how much meaning could be achieved from pupils' perspectives during this time. I also piloted the questions I proposed to ask of pupils at this time.

As indicated in Chapter Five, I conducted the BM sessions with two class groups over three sessions for each group, with a follow up session reporting back the themes the co-analyst and I had identified. This was done between September and October 2013. At the beginning of each session I informed/reminded pupils of their right to withdraw from the session at any point if they felt they wished to do so, and that they were not required to give a reason to the adults for their wishing to withdraw. I also told them that if they did not wish to answer any question this was also their right, along with returning to the session, if they had withdrawn, but then wished to return. One pupil asked to leave a session, and through his talking to me when he chose to re-enter the room, it was clear that he thought he could leave and sit to have his lunch earlier. I took this to indicate that it was not the content of what we were discussing that generated his wish to leave, but a hungry stomach! These sessions were also voice recorded so that I could reflect on the content and analyse the pupils' contributions, mirroring the procedure used for the CI transcripts.

The support worker (SW) already allocated to each class group assisted me during these sessions, administratively and facilitating typical classroom (not research based) discussions. This was the normal staff to pupil ratio for classes in the school. The BM activity occurred in this way; each pupil was asked to lie on their back on a long piece of paper that fit the length of their body. Either the support worker or I then drew an outline of their body onto the paper, which often resulted in giggling at the threat of being tickled and chatting about what they would "look like" on the paper. Pupils then each had a body outline of their own which they drew, wrote or cut and pasted physical items (sequins, pipe cleaners, artificial hair and eyes, abstract shapes, glitter, for example) or magazine pictures onto as they answered my questions. This was done on the classroom floor, with me and the support worker present sitting on the floor with them, facilitating the use of resources if they asked for assistance. Some pupils had difficulty cutting out shapes, due to the fine motor skills required, for example.

In order to make the sessions feel more natural to them, I did not run them with individual pupils because they were already used to joining in with such activities together as a class. Their discussions, as they were working on their body maps also elucidated further questions I asked, as I proceeded to gain a deeper insight into what they were communicating. Having the support worker from each class to co-facilitate these sessions with me further normalised the procedure. These adults were not there to elicit meaning

from the pupils about their portrayals, but rather to support me in an administrative sense, preparing resources and ensuring the sessions ran smoothly. In session three, I used the pictorial versions of the RF (see Appendices Eight and Nine) to further scaffold my questions. This process was used to ensure any themes that pupils may have had difficulty expressing verbally or visually on the body maps were captured with pictorial scaffolding of the RF. I also involved the co-analyst, eliciting her views and the possible meanings pupils were sharing, comparing them to my own, in follow-up feedback with her after each BM session.

Body Mapping Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used to determine themes and sub-themes from the BM transcripts. The same procedure for these was used by me and the co-analyst as we used for analysing the CI transcripts. TA was also completed for written responses to the pictorial versions of the RF in session three (see Appendices Eight and Nine). No new themes emerged from this analysis, but some of the existing themes from the previous BM sessions were repeated by the pupils.

Instrument: Resilience Measure

Resilience is a remarkably complex construct (see Chapter Three), which means it does not lend itself easily to being measured. In their methodological review of resilience measurement scales, Windle, Bennett and Moyes (2011, p.1) sum this up, writing "The conceptual and theoretical adequacy of a number of the scales was questionable. We found no current 'gold standard' amongst 12 measures of resilience…and all require further validation work". Windle et al.'s (2011) review did not find any adequate measure of childhood resilience. When deciding upon which resilience measures may be applied to children with complex needs, I sought guidance from Professor Odin Hjemdal. Professor Hjemdal has developed resilience scales for adults and children over the past ten years. In our personal correspondence (1st September, 2012) Professor Hjemdal informed me that there were currently no measures of resilience for children with complex needs and that perhaps interviewing children would be a more appropriate way of capturing their resilience at the current time.

Recommendations have been made by resilience researchers about how to best capture movement in the construct within individuals (it must be remembered, however, that these do not specifically apply to children with complex needs). These are to; measure resilience over time (Rutter, 1999), use valid measures (Windle et al., 2011), use multiple measurements (Rutter, 1993), define the construct carefully (Naglieri & LeBuffe, in Goldstein & Brooks, 2004) and choose an appropriate approach (Masten 2001) – those being variable focused or person focused. Masten (2001) states that the variable focused approach is powerful statistically and can identify links between predictors and outcomes. However, this does not capture the lives of real people and can leave out the picture of who is at greatest risk and in need of intervention. Conversely, the person focused approach studies variables that are naturally occurring, which means research may highlight uncommon patterns through time in people's lives that can impact on development. All of these recommendations apply to children with complex needs, but equally, do not acknowledge their specific needs.

Consequently, I looked for resilience measures that were being developed for use with children with complex needs specifically. Macpherson, Hart and Heaver (2012) identified the need to develop a self-evaluative measure of resilience for people with learning difficulties. They did this by rewording and developing questions from a pre-existing and valid measure (Connor & Davidson, 2003, in Macpherson et al., 2012) and combining it with some aspects of the RF, namely; belonging, learning and core self, in a tick box format (see Appendix Four). However, the authors found that participants self-evaluated very highly as being resilient, despite being selected for the research on the basis of being in a marginalised social position. They contend that perhaps researchers are still imposing a construct as it is viewed by those without learning difficulties onto those with such complexity in their lives, and that wider consultation about what resilience is for this group of people needs to occur (Macpherson et al., 2012; see Chapter Three). Despite this, I felt that the questions on this survey may be useful as a springboard with pupils to get them thinking and talking about their resilience in the BM sessions. The language was adapted to suit the school context.

Resilience Measure Participants

The Resilience Measure, designed by MacPherson et al. (2012; see Appendix Four) for children with complex needs was used as a questioning tool, not as a measure of resilience in pupils, along with a pictorial version of the RF (see Appendices Eight and Nine), in session three of the BM session with all 12 pupils.

Resilience Measure Procedure

This tool was used within the third BM session with pupils to scaffold or re-frame my questions. For example, pupils appeared to find it difficult understanding my question of what it was that staff did for them at school to help them be their best. I re-framed this to a similar question from the Resilience Measure, asking them "Who helps you when you need help at school?"

Resilience Measure Analysis

Responses from the Resilience Measure's questions that were used are contained within the thematic analysis of transcripts and are presented in Chapter Eight.

Date	Data Source and Participants	Description	Analysis
Oct 2012	Pre-RF audit of staff understanding of concept or resilience and confidence in implementing it in practice n=25 staff	The format of the audit was a closed rating scale, taking the form of a 5 point Likert ranking ranging from not at all, to average, to very confident. Cronbach's alpha of 0.918	Shift in means over time of quantitative responses Thematic analysis of open ended questions.
May 2013	SDQ data pre RF n=12 pupils	25 item brief behavioural screening questionnaire that asks respondents to give one of four ratings to each item, on five sub-scores; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and pro-social behaviour.	Wilcoxon Signed Rank to measure significance of shift in means over time.
July 2013	Attainment data pre RF n=12 pupils	A 'levelling' assessment system of pupil progress which was in place nationally. Attainment data can be understood thus; C beside a number indicates that that pupil has achieved one third of all the learning objectives expected for that year, B indicates two thirds have been achieved and A shows that all learning objectives have been mastered by the pupil. The numerical value indicates the year group that that pupil is working at; 1 means Year One learning objectives are being taught and learnt.	Compared to national expectations that all pupils make two sub levels' progress per academic year.
July 2013	Attendance data pre RF n=12 pupils	Attendance figures show the number of sessions a pupil was able to attend, totalling 100%, along with the number of sessions missed due to reasons as explicit as medical appointments, being excluded or family holidays taken.	t test to measure change in attendance over time one and time two.
July 2013	Pilot body mapping sessions n= 3 pupils	Arts-based, participatory approach. 3 sessions each with 2 class groups. See Chapter Six	Thematic Analysis
Sept – Oct 2013	Body mapping sessions n=12 pupils	Arts-based, participatory approach. 3 sessions each with 2 class groups. See Chapter Six	Thematic Analysis
Sept – Oct 2013	Collaborative Inquiry n=16 staff	An approach used to develop teacher practice by engaging in a continuous improvement process of reflection that allows staff to take more ownership of decision making processes. See Chapters Five and Six	Thematic Analysis
March 2014	Attendance data post RF n=12 pupils	Attendance figures show the number of sessions a pupil was able to attend, totalling 100%, along with the number of sessions missed due to reasons as explicit as medical appointments, being excluded or family holidays taken.	t test to measure change in attendance over time one and time two.
May 2014	SDQ data post RF n=12 pupils	25 item brief behavioural screening questionnaire that asks respondents to give one of four ratings to each item, on five sub-scores; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and pro-social behaviour.	Wilcoxon Signed Rank to measure significance of shift in means over time.
July 2014	Attainment data post RF n=8 pupils	A 'levelling' assessment system of pupil progress which was in place nationally. Attainment data can be understood thus; C beside a number indicates that that pupil has achieved one third of all the learning objectives expected for that year, B indicates two thirds have been achieved and A shows that all learning objectives have been mastered by the pupil. The numerical value indicates the year group that that pupil is working at; 1 means Year One learning objectives are being taught and learnt.	Compared to national expectations that all pupils make two sub levels' progress per academic year.
Oct 2014	Post RF implementation survey of understanding of concept or resilience and confidence in applying it in practice n=28 staff	The format of the survey was a closed rating scale, taking the form of a 5 point Likert ranking ranging from not at all, to average, to very confident. Cronbach's alpha of 0.918	Shift in means over time of quantitative responses Thematic analysis of open ended questions.

Table 6.2: Timeline of Data Sources and Participants for Each Method Used

Summary

This Chapter has outlined the instruments, participants, procedures and forms of analysis used for each of the methods in this research. The quantitative methods are; the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (a measure of social and emotional progress made by pupils), attendance figures, academic attainment and the mean scores of staff confidence ratings on the pre-RF implementation audit and post RF implementation survey. The qualitative methods are; collaborative inquiry with staff (framed within an action research methodology), and an arts-based, participatory approach - body mapping - with pupils. I have demonstrated considerations made when deciding on methods appropriate for children with complex needs (see Chapters Four and Five). It was my hope that by using mixed methods, I could gain data that was as accurate and meaningful as possible. Chapters Seven and Eight present the data from each of these methods, in Part Three "The Findings: Evidence of Change".

Part 3

The Findings: Evidence of Change

Chapter Seven: The Quantitative Data: Measurable Outcomes

Introduction

Quantitative measures in this research included; scores from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire ((SDQ) Goodman, 1997 in Hall, 2010), pupils' school attendance and their academic attainment. Along with these measures of impact on pupils, descriptive statistics from the Resilience-based Practice Audit/Survey (see Appendix Three) were analysed to assess staff confidence at understanding and applying the concept of resilience with their pupils over time (see Chapter Six). The quantitative data from staff audit/survey responses with respect to their confidence levels before and after using the Resilience Framework (RF) in their daily practice is presented in this chapter. As referred to in Chapter Six, quantitative pre and post RF implementation measures were recorded. For pupils, these were SDQ scores (May 2013 and May 2014), attendance (July 2012 and March 2014), academic attainment (July 2013 and July 2014) and staff confidence ratings (October 2012 and October 2014). The analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

As referred to in Chapter Five, the SDQ (see Appendix Two) was used by the school, as a measure of pupils' social and emotional progress. The SDQ gives four scores or outcomes that are dependent on teacher assessment, where they complete an on-line questionnaire for each individual pupil. In order of ranking from little or no concern through to the highest level of concern, the scores are; mostly doing well, some concern, medium concern and definite concern. In total, 12 pupils were present during the time of the research from Class A and Class B and the results are shown in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1 shows the individual SDQ scores for each pupil involved in the research. For the purposes of analysis, the four possible ratings were allocated the following scores:
Definite Concern = 4
Medium Concern = 3
Some Concern = 2
Mostly Doing Well = 1

As can be seen a lower score is a positive indicator of better social and emotional well-being. Where pupils' scores had improved, for example, Logan's score in May 2013 was 4 (definite concern) and had fallen to 1 (mostly doing well) by May 2014, this demonstrated an improvement for this pupil. Whereas, Ronald was rated 4 (definite concern) in May 2013 and again rated 4 (definite concern) in the follow up SDQ review, so was considered to have shown no improvement.

Pupil	May 2013 Score	May 2014 Score	Outcome
Kieran	4	4	No improvement
Harry	4	4	No improvement
Logan	4	1	Improvement
Ronald	4	4	No improvement
Andrew	4	2	Improvement
Bob	3	1	Improvement
Christian	3	1	Improvement
Adrian	3	1	Improvement
Daniel	2	1	Improvement
Paul	3	1	Improvement
Cecil	3	1	Improvement
Greg	2	1	Improvement
	Mean = 3.25	Mean = 1.83	

Table 7.1: Strengths and Difficulties Scores Pre and Post RF Implementation
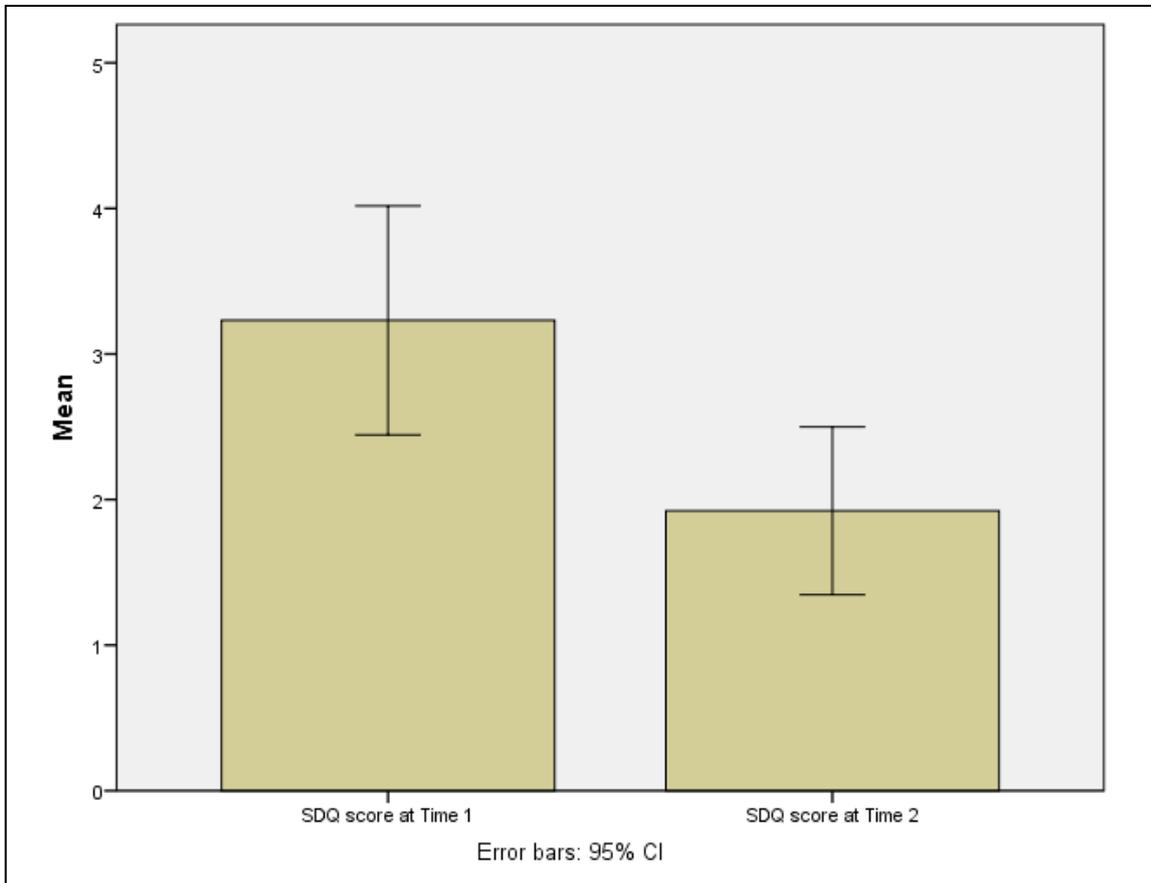
Figure 7.1: Comparison of SDQ Scores Pre and Post RF Implementation

Figure 7.1 shows a positive shift in means between October 2013 (mean = 3.25) and May 2014 (mean = 1.83). This shows that the average rating on SDQ scores for pupils in October 2013 was "some concern", which had shifted by May 2014 to sitting above this, between "medium concern" and "mostly doing well", across all pupils. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to determine the significance of changes in SDQ scores over time. There was a statistically significant improvement in scores (Z=-2.754, P=.006) (see Appendix Ten).

Attendance

As stated in Chapter Six, pupils' attendance can range from 0% (not attending school at all) to 100% (full attendance). The Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted's) view of outstanding attendance is 96% or above. Table 7.2 illustrates the mean scores in pupil attendance in July 2013, compared to July 2014.

Pupil	Attendance July 2013 (%)	Attendance March 2014 (%)	Outcome Decreased/Increased Attendance Between 2013 and 2014
Kieran	70%	79%	Increased 9%
Harry	73%	83%	Increased 10%
Logan	94%	89%	Decreased 5%
Ronald	97%	98%	Increased 1%
Andrew	93%	92%	Decreased 1%
Bob	100%	96%	Decreased 4%
Christian	94%	97%	Increased 3%
Adrian	90%	95%	Increased 5%
Daniel	94%	94%	Static
Paul	99%	99%	Static
Cecil	85%	87%	Increased 2%
Greg	93%	93%	Static
	Mean =90.17%	Mean 91.83 =%	

Table 7.2: School Attendance Percentages between July 2013 and March 2014
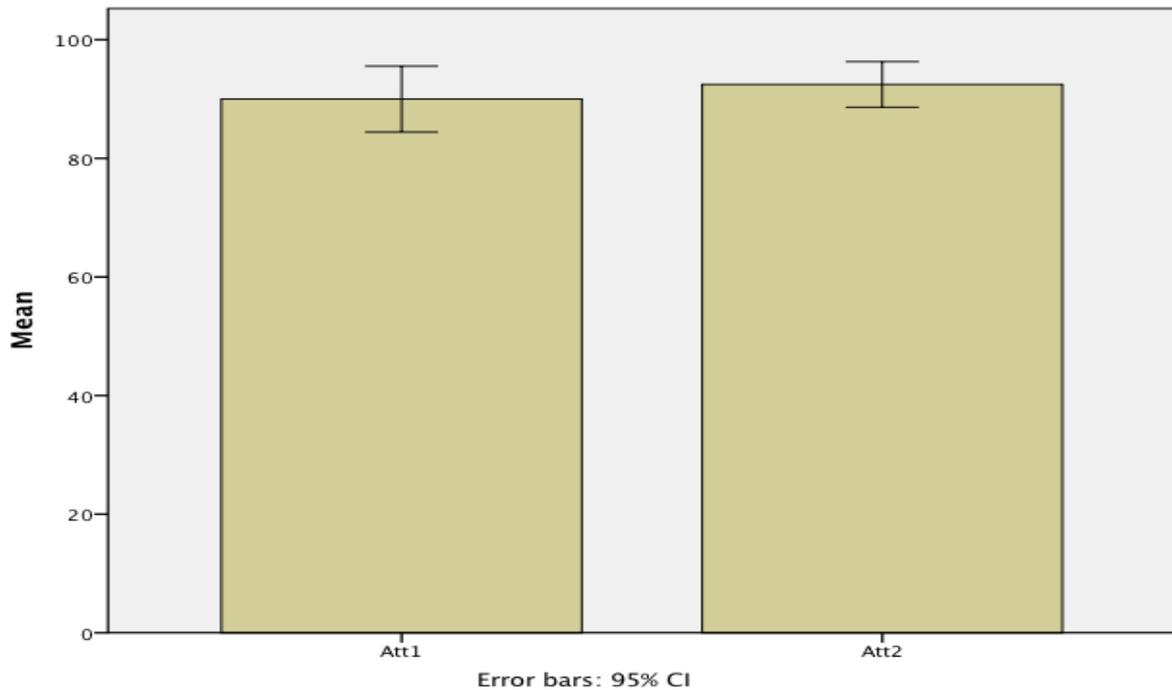
Figure 7.2: Comparison of Attendance Pre and Post RF Implementation

Figure 7.2 compares pupil attendance pre and post RF implementation. The shift in means from time one (July 2013) to time two (March 2014) improved by 1%, across all pupils. There was no statistically significant shift in pupils' school attendance data (t (11)=-1.27, P=.232) (see Appendix Eleven). This means there was not a statistically significant improvement in attendance over time as a result of the intervention.

Academic Attainment

At the time of this research being undertaken, a 'levelling' assessment system (known as sub-levels, see Definitions and Terms) of pupil progress was in place nationally, for state funded schools. Eleanor Smith School was required to comply with this structure also. The progress data found in Table 7.3 below can be understood thus; C beside a number indicates that that pupil has achieved one third of all the learning objectives expected for that year, B indicates two thirds have been achieved and A shows that all learning objectives have been mastered by the pupil. The numerical value indicates the year group that that pupil is working at; 1 means Year One learning objectives are being taught and learnt, 2 indicates Year 2 and so on. In practical terms, with reference to Table 7.3, this means that in 2013 Kieran was working at Year One level (which is actually below his national age-related expectations), having achieved one third of the English learning objectives (C) in 2013, but had made progress in 2014 to having achieved all of the learning objectives (A).

All pupils made academic progress during the year of data collection. However, only 50% of the pupils involved achieved the national expectation of two sub levels' progress in English and 25% of them did so in Maths between July 2013 and July 2014 (see Table 7.3 below). It was not possible to compare whether pupils had made academic progress the year before the RF had been implemented, as they were not on roll at that time.

Pupil	English 2013	English 2014	Progress	Maths 2013	Maths 2014	Progress
Kieran	1C	1A	Yes*	1A	2B	Yes*
Harry	1B	2B	Yes	1A	2C	Yes
Logan	1C	Not on roll	-	1B	Not on roll	-
Ronald	1B	Mainstream	-	2A	Mainstream	-
Andrew	3B	3A	Yes	3C	3A	Yes*
Bob	1A	2B	Yes*	2B	2A	Yes
Christian	3C	3B	Yes	3C	3B	Yes
Adrian	2B	2A	Yes	2A	3C	Yes
Daniel	2A	3B	Yes*	2B	2A	Yes
Paul	3C	Mainstream	-	3C	Mainstream	-
Cecil	2A	3B	Yes*	2B	2A	Yes
Greg	2C	Not on roll	-	Not on roll	Not on roll	-

Table 7.3: Academic Attainment Data in English and Maths July 2013 and July 2014

Note: * indicates national expectation of two sub levels' progress was made.

Resilience-based Practice Audit/Survey

Pre-existing data in the school was used, based upon the audit staff completed in October 2012 (n=25) and compared to data from re-presenting this as a survey in October 2014 (n=28). The audit had been developed by the head teacher (see Chapter Six), based upon pre-existing knowledge of literature in the field and experiential understanding. It was presented to staff as the 'Resilience-based Practice Audit/Survey'. Cronbach's alpha of .918 (see Appendix Twelve) indicates internal consistency between the survey questions is "excellent" (Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p.87). The same members of staff did not necessarily complete the audit and the survey, and paired matching was not possible due to the anonymous presentation of the audit and the survey. An overall improvement in feelings of confidence for staff across all audit questions was evident. The mean in staff confidence ratings in the 2012 audit data is 20.32 compared to an upward shift to 25.81 in the 2014 survey. This indicates that staff confidence in understanding and applying the concept of resilience-based practice with their pupils had improved over time.

Summary

There was a statistically significant improvement in SDQ scores for pupils over the time of this research being conducted. This indicates that pupils' social and emotional progress had been impacted upon positively over time during implementation of the RF in the school. While attendance had also slightly improved, this finding was of no statistical significance, possible reasons for which are discussed in Chapter Nine. All pupils had made academic progress over time, however, not at age expected levels. Reasons for this are also discussed in Chapter Nine, where the findings are discussed in detail. An increase in staff confidence was also evident, showing an improvement in ratings of confidence overall between 2012 and 2014. The quantitative data gives evidence for achieving better outcomes for pupils with complex needs using resilience-based practice over time. In the subsequent chapter, Chapter Eight, the qualitative data from all data sets referred to in Chapter Six is presented.

Chapter Eight: The Qualitative Data: Themes from Shared Experiences

Introduction

Presentation of the qualitative data in this chapter illuminates facilitators of, and barriers to, supporting the development of resilience in children with complex needs through the application of the Resilience Framework ((RF) Hart, Blincow & Thomas, 2007 Appendix One). As outlined in Chapter Three, the RF is divided into five conceptual arenas; the basics, belonging, learning, coping and core self. These are all underpinned by four "Noble Truths", or principles of acceptance by those working with children, conserving protective aspects that already exist in their lives known to enhance resilience, remaining committed to them over the long term and enlisting the assistance of others to provide holistic support. Within each of the conceptual arenas, strategies that are known to work from the resilience research base, experiential and practitioner knowledge are listed. Where the themes from the data fit within the Framework, they are referenced to Hart et al. (2007) fully in the first instance and then by page number throughout this Chapter.

The analysis set out in this Chapter is arranged pre-RF implementation in the school (October 2012), followed by post implementation (October 2014). To establish the context regarding facilitators and barriers prior to commencement of the research, I briefly outline the status quo drawn from staff responses to the 'Resilience-based Practice' audit (see Chapter Six &Appendix Three). This provides a baseline of staff confidence in understanding and using the concept prior to the Framework being used in daily practice, compared to any possible changes once they were more familiar with how it could be used, subsequent to implementation. Prior to whole school staff training that was completed after this audit was conducted, I was the only member of staff who had any in-depth knowledge of the concept of resilience and strategies that may be used in daily practice to achieve better outcomes for children (see Chapter One). However, this journey was very new to me also, and while I had engaged in background reading and research, I had no professional experience of its application.

The audit and survey had the same format of Likert scales (see Chapters Five & Six), followed by open ended questions, the answers to which were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA). The only pre-RF data collected was the audit of staff confidence and ideas relating to their use of resilience-building strategies, conducted in October 2012. Before the RF was implemented in the school, staff were asked to complete the audit pertaining to their knowledge of, and confidence in using strategies that may support resilience development in pupils, as outlined in sections 8.1 and 8.2. The data generated post RF implementation is the staff's re-completion of the survey in October 2014 (sections 5.3 and 5.4) and the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) group's action research (sections 5.5 and 5.6). Feedback from pupils via the Body Mapping ((BM) see Appendix Seven) methodology is presented in sections 8.7 and 8.8.

Figure 8.1 draws all the themes, both pre and post RF implementation together, allowing for direct comparison of pupil and staff views before and after RF implementation over time. Commonalities are noticeable (highlighted in bold shading), with, interestingly, some of them being pre and post RF implementation, indicating that staff were already using some resilience-supporting strategies in their practice that existed in the literature, without

already having been informed by it. How the literature explains the findings presented in this Chapter and Chapter Seven is shared in Chapter Nine. Implications for future practice as a result of this analysis are presented in Chapter Ten.

Facilitators of Resilience-Based Practice-Themes

Staff

Pre-RF

8.1.1 Approaches being used without conscious intent
8.1.2 Behavioural model being used
- Working *at* parents

Post-RF

8.3.1 Explicit use of RF in practice
8.5.1 Strategies named and applied
8.5.2 Shared language
- Working *with* parents

Staff and Pupils
Overlapping Themes Post-RF
- Talents and interests
- Mapping out a life plan
- Sense of belonging
- Coping
- Listening
- Positive Relationships
- Giving Back to others

Pupils

Post-RF

8.7.1 "They sort us out"
8.7.2 "They help with my learning"
8.7.3 "I am good at something"
8.7.4 "This school feels like a big family"

Barriers of Resilience-Based Practice Themes

Staff

Pre-RF

8.2.1 Time
8.2.2 Uncertainty

Post-RF

8.4.1 Time
8.4.2+8.6.1 Uncertainty
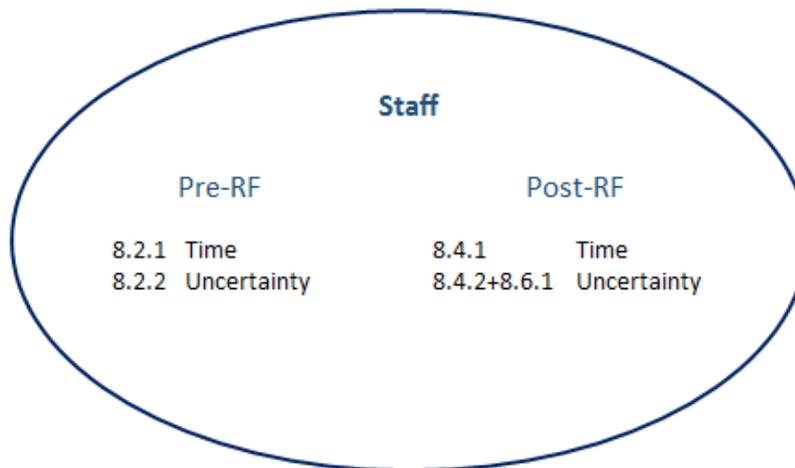
Figure 8.1: Themes and Sub-Themes in Qualitative Data Sets: Staff Audit and Survey, Collaborative Inquiry and Pupil Body Mapping

Resilience-based Practice Audit Pre-Resilience Framework Implementation

All staff working at the school in October 2012 were asked to complete the audit anonymously, prior to RF implementation. There were 25 members of staff at this time (see Chapter Six).

8.1   Facilitators Supporting Resilience Development in Pupils with Complex Needs
8.1.1 Approaches Being Used Without Conscious Intent

In 2012 some staff appeared to be familiar with some of the strategies that support resilience development in their audit responses. However, this seemed to be more from experiential knowledge of what may help pupils with complex needs to engage in school life more effectively than being founded on evidence-based practice aimed purposely at developing resilience. Two examples of staff using resilience building language, without specifically referring to doing so are;

> *"Remind them of their strengths/use of skills to explain how they can be transferred to other areas of life"* and

> *"Find out what other skills they have".*

The language of skills and strengths is confirmed in the resilience literature base; the RF itself recommends developing life skills (Hart et al., 2007, p.98) and fostering talents (p.117) and interests (p.138). Staff do not go on to give practice based examples of how they do this, they simply state that they do it. Perhaps they take it as a given that I would know what they meant, as an insider researcher (see Chapters Four & Five), or perhaps they did not think they should elaborate more. This contrasts starkly with responses post-implementation, as will be seen.

Along with an awareness of the importance of viewing pupils' strengths and skills, staff also appeared to highlight the essential nature of giving pupils time and support; of listening to them. The co-analyst and I viewed these strategies as showing an acknowledgement of the importance of relationships between staff and pupils within the school. This is evident in the following feedback from two members of staff

> *"Listen. When they want to speak about problems – empathise with their situation/issues and do whatever possible to help ease their worries"* and

> *"Provide 1:1 support if I can or suggest who could help them".*

Support through listening/reflecting on behaviour was also expressed by another member of staff writing

> *"Aid reflection on impact of feelings on other people and themselves. How to employ strategies to overcome challenge and have more positive outcomes".*

Empathy (via listening) and support are identified by these members of staff as strategies they use to help or assist pupils who are having difficulties. These views may be categorised under the "belonging" arena of strategies on the RF, whereby it suggests: help them [children] to understand their place in the world and that others may face similar situations (Hart et al, 2007, p.80), keep relationships going (p.70), and "coping": lean on others when necessary (p.120), identifying and solving problems (p.112) along with "core self": help the

person to know him or herself (p.134), and help the person take responsibility for her or himself (p.136).

Enlisting others (Hart et al, 2007, p.36) was also apparent in staff responses to the open ended audit questions, where one member of staff wrote

> *"Help parents think about their child's needs",* with another stating

> *"Get parents to believe in their children's abilities and nurture them to reach full potential and change their outlook on life and successes",* and a colleague saying

> *"Parents need presentations to make them aware of resilience".*

However, these responses may be interpreted as more about getting parents to take responsibility, not working with them as partners to support their children in an ecological way. Words used by staff such as "help", "need" and "get" are imperatives, demanding something be done to parents, not with them, or stating that parents are lacking in something. It is also interesting to note that, at this point of the research, not one member of staff mentions enlisting any other people or agencies that may exist within a child's ecology; a point to remember with respect to post RF implementation responses.

8.1.2 A Behaviourist Perspective

Prior to implementation of the RF both the co-analyst and I viewed staff as using the school's behaviour policy and procedures to guide their practice. This is as opposed to having a broader, ecological view, endorsed by resilience-based practice, of supporting pupils. An example of this is expressed by a member of staff writing

> *"Understanding when they want to react and learning to control and manage themselves. Not being 'not bothered' but being concerned about themselves and what consequences these actions bring to them".*

As outlined in Chapter Three, before the RF was implemented into the school, the working model that guided the ethos and character of the school was a behaviourist one, of antecedents, behaviours and the resulting consequences. The language of "manage", "control" and "consequences [of] actions" demonstrates a behavioural approach (see Terms and Definitions) taken by staff that outlined their expectations of pupils. As an insider, I knew that at the time, staff used the language of "when, then…" with pupils. A consistent script staff used illustrating this being "When you…[comply with my instruction], then you will [be rewarded for doing so/not receive a consequence for non-compliance]". Our interpretation of this is further reinforced by other members of staff stating

> *"Take ownership. Facing up to difficulties and how to overcome them",*

> *"Positive reinforcement/acknowledgement of good behaviour, successes. Always make clear what I am praising pupil for"* and

> *"Let them take ownership of their behaviour. Being consistent"*

This input from staff members indicates that pupils need to own their behaviour and highlights the importance of consistency of consequences thereafter (positive or negative); an important developmental task, given their identified needs. There is a link here between staff expectations (pre-RF implementation) and pupils' views, where pupils talked about

staff, and not themselves, being responsible for their behaviour. This is considered further in the summary section.

8.2   Barriers to resilience development
8.2.1 Time
There was a significant theme of staff feeling they lacked the time needed in the school day to be able to implement the strategies they thought may help resilience development in pupils. This is characterised by these quotes from two staff members:

> *"Limited time…and [the] emphasis on academic progress." "Targets. Subject pressures. Timetable"* and

> *"Not enough time. Behaviour prevents it".*

In any school environment it is not uncommon for school staff to feel there isn't enough time in the day to achieve all the tasks and requirements of their roles. This was certainly the case in staff feedback on the audit. Despite this, none of the feedback indicated staff seeing RF implementation as an additional task that they viewed negatively. It should be remembered though that, given they were responding to me, a well-established member of staff and a senior leader, they may not have felt able to do so – a power issue that is concomitant at times with insider research (see Chapter Five). I argue that whether or not they had reservations about the approach in the early days the school has clearly enjoyed successes. If staff were resistant to contributing to a whole school approach, they would not have been able to develop this approach in the way they did, discussed further in Chapter Ten.

8.2.2 Uncertainty about How to Work with the Framework
Having a lack of time to implement strategies they identified as supporting resilience in pupils was coupled with a feeling of uncertainty about how to do this by staff. Some expressed a desire to receive whole staff training so that they could do so with confidence, collectively. These wishes were expressed and highlighted through the use of the words "shared", "collective community", "whole staff", "our", "everyone", and "people". Examples of this collective ethos were extracted from the audit responses that follow;

> *"A shared understanding and ownership of all staff using resilience strategies as a collective community",*

> *"How to develop whole staff understanding and confidence when implementing strategies – incorporating things at work!"*

> *"How to incorporate it into our everyday school systems and practice",*

> *"For everyone to be mindful of the 'whole' picture, system…",* and finally,

> *"I think people need training on how to be empathetic and recognise a resilient child as one trying to cope but one who is still suffering the effects of their personal lives".*

This approach was new to staff, and it could have been viewed as yet another demand made on them to implement. Nevertheless, they appeared to be expressing an interest and

willingness to do so. Not one member of staff in their feedback recorded negative attitudes about implementing the RF. Again, it is important to note here that my position as an insider may have had an impact on staff feedback (see Chapter Five). This would not appear to be the case and will be considered more fully in Chapter Ten. It may also be indicative of a time in the life of the school whereby a change in practice was viewed as necessary, as summarised at the end of this chapter also.

Resilience-based Practice Survey Post-Resilience Framework Implementation

All staff were asked to complete the survey in October 2014, again anonymously, post RF implementation. The majority of staff who completed the audit in 2012 were still employed at the school. However, some staff members had left, and some were new to the school. A total of 28 staff completed the survey. The role and pseudonym for each staff member's feedback would have been presented here, but due to the audit and survey being completed anonymously, this was not possible.

8.3   Facilitators Supporting Resilience Development in Pupils with Complex Needs

8.3.1 Explicit, Ecological Practice is Embedded as a Whole School Approach

A clear shift in staff understanding of resilience as an ecological concept, and a move away from a reliance on a behavioural model is noted in the survey responses in 2014. Staff answers are more holistic and child-centred, drawing directly from, and using the language (some of it verbatim!), of the RF. This shift is expressed by the following members of staff saying;

> *"Think more creatively and individualise programmes. Work more collaboratively with parents/family members and other agencies",*

> *"If a pupil isn't receiving the basics, provide those for them: food/water, security/safety, healthy diet, play and leisure – exercise and fresh air. Have a laugh, but set boundaries. Highlight achievements when successful"* and finally,

> *"Develop relationships with pupils. Provide consistency and boundaries. Work with parents/ carers and other agencies. Remind them of positive experiences they have had".*

All of these examples within this theme show that staff could name and use RF strategies. Further to this, they were able to articulate how they can be used in combination, according to individual pupils' strengths and needs. They have used language specific to the RF, seen in "the basics, being safe, having a healthy diet, leisure, exercise and fresh air (Hart et al, 2007, p.42), understanding boundaries (p.108), highlighting achievements (p.96), getting together people the person can count on (p.75)". Staff were clearly using the RF in their practice and were able not only to name strategies, but how to use them in a combined, ecological manner to support resilience in their pupils. This is evidenced in the use of the words "programmes", "collaboratively" and "work with" (not parents as lacking in something, or needing to take action themselves, see 8.1.1).

This is in stark contrast to the 2012 audit feedback when there was no mention made of working in an ecological manner. At this point in time, staff had an awareness of the kinds of strategies that worked for their pupils that are known to support resilience, according to the research base. However, the shift in their understanding by 2014 is clear. They were then able to think of a child within their broader context – stating the need to involve others, focus on strengths, provide clear boundaries, work with parents and ensure that basic human needs were being met.

8.4   Barriers to Resilience Development

8.4.1 Time

Again, as in the 2012 audit data, in staff responses on the 2014 survey, a lack of time due to curriculum demands was identified as a barrier to resilience development in pupils. This is clear in the following survey excerpts;

> *"Time restrictions and curriculum demands",* and

> *"Too much pressure on results – GCSEs/qualifications/targets".*

Other members of staff supported this view, writing

> *"Curriculum, levels, academic targets. Only 5 minutes in tutor time"* and

> *"Time to implement as the pressure is on exams, improving levels etc."*

Staff clearly felt role pressures and appeared to be expressing a frustration about not meeting pupils' non-academic needs. Words such as "pressure" and "demands" imply a negative connotation to the curriculum and delivery expectations on teachers that they feel act as barriers to their supporting resilience in pupils. When reviewed, the feedback from staff instigated the school seeking a tool that would enable them to assess pupils' non-academic needs, in an attempt to re-dress the perceived imbalance between learning and developmental needs. The approach decided upon is known as 'Thrive' (Thrive, 2015; see Chapters Three & Nine). Thrive is a more sensitive measure of social and emotional progress, according to developmental needs when compared to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). How it could have been applied in this research is referred to more fully in Chapter Nine.

8.4.2 Uncertainty about How to Work with the Framework

Some members of staff still felt that further embedding was required for the RF to be used as a whole school approach –

> *"Embed across the WHOLE SCHOOL. ALL staff",* coupled with

> *"…staff time to share and communicate and develop ideas"* and

> *"Refresh all staff knowledge and new staff knowledge of using resilience framework".*

These members of staff clearly felt that more time and space needed to be dedicated to share and develop ideas to implement the RF more fully. The call seemed to be being made for further staff training, as it was in 2012, prior to any training being received. It is interesting that while the general consensus in survey feedback in 2014 is one of more confidence and explicit evidence-based ideas being shared, some staff wanted further collective support. In reviewing the survey feedback, a number of staff were still expressing a lack of confidence, and the desire for further training (as in 2012). It is impossible to tell from the data gathered whether the particular staff who mentioned needing more support were part of the small group who were part of the ongoing collaborative inquiry group. In hindsight it would have been useful to ask staff to identify whether they were a member of this group when filling out the questionnaire. It may be that being part of this group

supported staff to feel more confident, through having the dedicated time and space to discuss and share practice with other staff members regularly.

Collaborative Inquiry (Staff) Post Resilience Framework Implementation

A Collaborative Inquiry (CI) group was set up with staff, consisting of a cook, a cleaner, a lunchtime supervisor, a support worker, teachers, senior leaders (myself included) and the head teacher (see Chapter Six). Ten members of staff participated in at least two out of three CI sessions. During these sessions an action research approach was used to answer the research questions about what members thought acted as facilitators of, or barriers to, resilience development in their pupils whilst simultaneously using the RF (see Appendices Five & Six).

8.5   Facilitators Supporting Resilience Development in Pupils with Complex Needs

8.5.1 Naming Strategies

The main facilitators CI group members identified as supporting resilience development were specific strategies they felt worked for pupils, that they were able to name and share. Their understanding of working with parents, compared to staff feedback in the audit, stood out:

"Something I think we could develop a lot more, is work that we're doing with parents or grandparents or carers" (inclusion manager), along with

"I think this would be great if we could spread this out to our parents as well so that our families have an idea about what we're celebrating" (teacher).

Note the difference in use of language between staff audit (2012) and the CI (2013). The CI members are talking about working with parents, not in isolation without including them. The RF had begun to be used in the school while the CI group was running concurrently. CI members may have had more awareness of the benefits of working in this way as a result. It may also not have been these members of staff who wrote this in the audit feedback. Perhaps, if they consented to being part of the CI sessions, these members of staff already had a resilience-building 'mind set', and so were more likely to be able to discuss appropriate strategies with more confidence. Acceptance of parents was evident in these transcripts, whereby the head teacher went on to say

"...and I thought with all her [a parent] issues that are going on for her and in terms of like the framework, or resilience, it's huge, as we know, family issues there...in terms of what the future might hold, but actually for her to attend an assembly in a public forum where she knows other people know what's happening for her, I admired her because she turned up".

These views as espoused by the above members of staff, indicate a level of acceptance (Hart et al, 2007, p.25) of parents and starting at their current points in life, working alongside them; an ecological view of resilience work. As a result of the discussions about how staff could work in partnership with parents, it was decided that the school would offer an introduction to the RF at a parent group meeting, would buy in the "Insider's Guide" (see www.BoingBoing.org, a programme for parents of children with complex needs who want to support their own resilience) and offer this to them in the future, along with providing a literacy skills course. These strategies were agreed to be included in the Resilience Development Action Plan ((RDAP); see Appendix Thirteen), with actions and timeframes included to ensure this happened.

CI group members also recognised the importance of building on strengths – developing talents (Hart et al, 2007, p.141) and interests (p.116) – in all pupils. This is clearly evident in my contribution:

> *"It's all about building on their strengths – find out what they're good at…making them as independent as possible so they actually feel good about themselves" (senior leader)*

In its first year of implementation the new extra-curricular club initiative driven by staff and pupil feedback had a pupil take up of 53%. By year two, this had increased to 82% of pupils. This also led to a shift in school ethos from a behaviourist view, whereby any activity deemed as a 'reward' had to be earned. In the spirit of the resilience research evidence base, clubs were offered to pupils unconditionally, regardless of their behaviour during the school day. This openly acknowledged that pupils with inequalities who were facing tough odds already needed positive experiences to build upon. Endorsing this approach to moving on from the former way of working, one staff member said

> *"…if children have nothing to lose, they will give up; how can they ever feel good about themselves if they don't have the opportunities to find out what they're good at?" (senior teacher)*

This change in thinking was a challenge for some members of staff, as will be discussed in the implications Chapter that follows.

CI group members recognised ensuring basic needs are met to be an essential resilience-developing strategy. This is reflected in the following contribution made by a support worker:

> *"…we provide a place for him to self soothe and give him the basics about nurturing him, food is very important, but also to be able to cuddle soft toys".*

A register of which pupils attended breakfast club was started, along with invitations being given to specific children who staff noticed were coming to school hungry or unfocused. Staff acknowledged that while the school already did a lot to address basic needs for pupils, more could be done to facilitate this.

The importance of being the potential significant adult in a child's life, and keeping relationships going (Hart et al, 2007, p.70) was also acknowledged by CI group members. This is encapsulated by group members' comments, such as a teacher stating

> *"…we know how to encourage good relationships",* and *"…we're really conscious of the relationships that we build up with kids…About how important it is, and we're doing that day in and day out".*

Another colleague (teacher) endorsed this, saying a way the school does this is

> *"…we give them significant adults",* going on to say *"…yeah, if he's [pupil] going through a difficult time, we deal with it, but the next day we're with him and keep that relationship going…"*

These assertions also correlate with staff audit feedback on the importance of listening to pupils. I argue that if staff didn't listen to and know pupils, relationships that contribute to pupils finding somewhere to belong/having a sense of belonging (Hart et al, 2007, p.68) to

the school would be less evident. As an insider researcher I was not surprised to uncover this as a theme from staff, as I perceived this to be a strength of the school pre-RF implementation. The co-analyst agreed with me. Feedback from outside agencies, parents and Ofsted has also confirmed this in the past. For children to feel they belong as part of a community they need to feel safe within it. An element of pupils feeling safe and secure within the school is also evident in the following excerpts from the transcripts:

> *"I saw [pupil] encouraging [pupil] to go back to class. I really think we give him a sense of belonging. He really feels he belongs here"* (support worker),

and the head teacher thinking of an example, saying that

> *"I think that [feeling safe] adds to the sense of belonging…"*

A teacher concurred, stating

> *"He [pupil] feels safe here, that sense of belonging…he came in one morning after we'd been told about his family situation and he was worried about being taken away [by Social Care] while he was here, and you know, a little arm around the shoulder said 'It's OK' and he came out of his shell a little bit, because people allowed that to happen…We wouldn't have much control if that was going to happen, but so long as he knows that people know about what's going on, and that we're here for him was, I think, a big thing for him".*

The physical location of the secondary site of the school meant that some pupils' attendance was poor. This was sometimes due to pupils not being able to physically transcend between one postcode and another, out of fear for their safety in the local community (see Chapter Ten). CI group members began to consider ideas for how this need could be better met by the school. Targeted pupils were identified for taxi transportation (access and transport, Hart et al, 2007 p.54) to be made to and from school, so they did not have to walk or catch buses, which could potentially be putting their safety at risk locally.

CI group members also identified developing coping (Hart et al, 2007 p101) in pupils as a key facilitator of resilience. They named various ways in which this was achieved with children at the school, with the inclusion manager, for example, saying

> *"…it's an early developmental need and a coping strategy about what goes on outside of school and I think we give him, maybe we've given him his coping strategy".*

The head teacher agreed with this, quoting another example in the school's daily practice;

> *"…and that [cuddling soft toys] is a way of him calming himself and self-soothing himself"* (Hart et al, 2007, p.118).

The midday supervisor in the group agreed with these examples, contributing an example she had experienced earlier that week -

> *"…he was really angry and within seconds he'd calmed down because I said to him 'If I can get [pupil] over here and apologise in front of her, will that make it better?' and he said 'Yeah'".*

She reported the pupil coping well after this, in a public situation where he would normally have felt embarrassed and expressed this in anger in the past. This also reinforces staff feedback in the 2012 audits, whereby pupils feeling listened to appears to have an impact on their ability to cope with difficult situations.

The final facilitator of resilience-based practice evident in the CI transcripts was the importance of mapping out a life plan (Hart et al, 2007, p.93). This was identified in the CI discussions as being another factor that the school actively promotes with pupils, with a senior teacher stating

> *"That's why we're giving them tasters of different things [work experience and college applications] so that they are equipped, they should be more understanding of whether they're going to make it or not, given this".*

The head teacher agreed with the school's strategy of mapping out a life plan as facilitating resilience in pupils, saying

> *"…the fact that last year, all of our kids left to go onto something, and that was through the team's hard work in key stage 4, of giving them a series of options, life options, about pinpointing their next step".*

Group members agreed with these observations that having aspirations and a plan had helped pupils to

> *"be what they [pupils] want to be"* (midday supervisor),

and this was considered to be an important contribution toward supporting resilience in pupils. Interestingly, a pupil mentions aspirations, through club participation in the Body Mapping section 8.7.3. Common themes (see Figure 8.1) such as this, between staff and pupil experiences and views, are shared in the summary section of this chapter.

The school uses research to support life planning (Hart et al, 2007 p.93) for pupils. For example, knowing that exposing them to four instead of the typical three work experience placements in Key Stage 4 (see Definitions and Terms) increases their likelihood of going on to further training or work, post school age. This is not easy to do, and local schools I have worked with as part of the HeadStart project (see Chapter Ten), all identified it as an area needing improvement when developing their whole school resilience approach with pupils. In the past four years, Eleanor Smith School has had all Key Stage 4 leavers go on to enrol in college, training or to begin work – an outcome that is not typical for young people with complex needs, as evidenced in Chapters Two and Three.

8.5.2 A Shared Language
Evidence of the use of a shared language being beneficial to resilience development in pupils existed in the CI session transcripts. CI group members identified having a shared language as a useful tool that supported their daily practice. This theme is evident in the following quotes:

> *"…you [CI participant] said 'hope'* (Hart et al, 2007, p.129) *and I said 'belonging'* (Hart et al, 2007, p.68) *and you're [CI participant] talking about basics* (Hart et al, 2007, p.42)*, so we've already got a shared language" (senior leader).*

A teacher supported this observation of our discussion, saying

"…you [CI participant] were saying the same, so were you [CI participant] about taking responsibility (Hart et al, 2007, p.136) *and you [CI participant] were about soothing and calming"* (p.118)*.*

The school's cook agreed, sharing a time she had explained the boundaries (Hart et al, 2007, p.108) to a pupil and modelling to him, using common language staff use. She reported

"He said 'I don't know'. So I try to explain things to him, he said 'Oh, I'm sorry Beatrice. Since then, if he comes to the counter, he say 'Beatrice please' and 'Beatrice thank you'. He just needed me to tell him to understand".

A senior teacher summed the cook's assertion up, saying

"It helps just having that language, that common language…every time we share with more of a common language…you become more understanding of what the core self (Hart et al, 2007, p.101) *is or the basics* (p.42) *and sometimes it's taken for granted that staff understand these things and the more we talk in common, the more they will".*

Language appears in this context to unite and guide practice (see Chapters Nine & Ten). The group agreed, as a result of this session, to actively promote use of the RF in daily meetings and when drawing up Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans for pupils, further highlighted in Chapter Ten. Interestingly, in the 2014 surveys some staff stated that they wanted time to share and talk to each other about what works for pupils and what other strategies they could explore. Suggestions were made to embed use of the RF vocabulary by incorporating it in the school's pupil planning meetings, along with daily briefing and de-briefing meetings.

CI members were able to name and describe their practice using the RF from the first meeting. Their confidence so early in RF implementation may not have been representative of the whole staff group. Again, they may have been more likely to consent to participation in the action research because they already had feelings of pre-existing confidence at using the Framework. Developments as a direct result of CI members' input into this research are considered in full in Chapter Ten.

8.6   Barriers to Resilience Development
8.6.1 Uncertainty about How to Work with the Framework
Another theme colleagues identified as a barrier or constraint against resilience-based practice was staff feelings of uncertainty. CI members identified that not all staff understood the framework at the time and that, consequently, it was not embedded in the school. One teacher stated

"…maybe it's not a whole school understanding of the framework yet, that it's not embedded".

I suggested that perhaps

"…making that [RF language] a lot clearer and how it all links up" (senior leader) may help with this, acknowledging his point.

As CI group members, we had had the opportunity to meet and speak with each other, reflecting on our practice (see Chapter Four), an opportunity that non-CI group members were not privy to. There appeared to be a feeling of more confidence in CI members' knowledge and use of the RF than non-CI members that was coming through the data, when compared to the audit and survey feedback. Unfortunately, as stated, I am unable to make direct comparisons of this. Staff audit and survey feedback indicated a desire to further their understanding and application of the RF, through shared training and practice.

Body Mapping (Pupils) Post-Resilience Framework Implementation

The accessible, creative methods of Body Mapping (BM) and using a pictorial version of the Framework (see Appendices Seven, Eight & Nine), as described in Chapter Six was used with 12 pupils, 11 male and one female, over three one hour sessions for three consecutive weeks. Pupils in this group ranged in age from eight to ten.

8.7   Facilitators Supporting Resilience Development in Pupils with Complex Needs
8.7.1 "They Sort Us Out"

Pupils in both BM groups spoke about how staff manage their behaviour, but equally teach them to take responsibility. This is apparent from how pupils presented their views on this, that the adults are seen to take responsibility for "sorting things out"…

> *"The teachers come over and take the ball and say 'You're on this team, and you're on this team' and then you get the game started. They sort us out" (Adrian)*

Logan concurred, saying

> *"…they [staff] take you from outside, cos normally we're at play [having had a difficulty with a peer]…and there's other teachers who say 'How have you been?', you know, cos like if you've had a blip or something and then they…and then they bring the class inside in line order and they tell them their points and then they sit them down at the floor or at the tables".*

Both Adrian and Logan's reports, use language such as "then they" [staff], "The teachers come over and take the ball" and "…they take you…", thereby allocating responsibility for managing behavioural or social difficulties to the staff. At no point in any of this part of the discussion did pupils mention taking ownership or responsibility for themselves. There appeared to be a heavy reliance on staff to control and manage relationships. The school rules were also spoken about frequently by pupils, who were able to discuss expectations and consequences of not following these rules fluently. They gave numerous examples of rules and the costs of not following them, such as

> *You should follow teacher's instructions" (Paul),* followed by Greg,

> *"Yeah and don't break school property".*

Elizabeth endorsed her peers' views, with

> *"You don't swear or kick people".*

I took this discussion as clear validation of both my own and the co-analyst's interpretations of the "when you…then…" behaviourist script that staff used in the school, discussed earlier in this Chapter.

Pupils appeared to view the school rules and social and behavioural expectations as providing boundaries and were clear that the expectation was that they should keep within

them (Hart et al, 2007, p.108); clear in the knowledge that if they didn't stay within the boundaries, staff would deal with this. We viewed this feedback by pupils as indicating that they feel secure within the school's boundaries. Discussion was generated when one pupil suggested it was important that everyone followed the school rules. This was followed by a consensus of pupils actively contributing to how the boundaries are shared and understood, along with agreement that keeping within these boundaries (p.108) at school is important. This feedback from pupils was in direct response to asking them what it is that staff do that helps them to be their best. They clearly felt that the school rules gave them some structure and boundaries that assisted them to do so.

This closely ties in with the behaviourist perspective being utilised by staff, which presented as a theme in the staff audit of 2012 (pre-RF implementation). It is clear from both staff and pupil feedback that a behavioural model (see Definitions and Terms) was being used and relied upon to support pupils (pre-RF implementation), with tangible examples given by both groups. Pupils having the opportunity to learn from and reflect on their difficulties emerged as another key theme staff highlighted when talking about the importance of listening to pupils in the audit and in the CI sessions. Staff made more mention of listening to and helping pupils to take responsibility for problem solving (Hart et al, 2007, p.112) post RF implementation. The analysis of the pupils' feedback, however, illuminated pupils lacking a sense of personal responsibility which was a concern many staff already shared in the school.

8.7.2 "It's Important to get a Good Education"
Pupils saw the academic support staff gave them as an essential activity that facilitated their development. They viewed both school staff and parental involvement in their education as key to assisting in their achievements. This is evident where Adrian says

> "It's important to get a good education. My mum and my teachers make sure I do. Sometimes it's hard, plus sometimes I don't know the answer. So there can be times I can't answer them all".

Connor concurred, stating

> "They help me like encouraging me to do my work in case it's getting a little bit hard for me".

A reliance on adult support, "they make sure I do" (both from school and home) is evident in this part of their feedback. Perhaps this would be less of a factor if older secondary pupils were participating (see Chapter Ten), as they may be more developmentally independent at this stage. This is a question that is beyond the scope of this research, but may be considered in future.

The use of a behaviourist model arose again from pupils in these discussions, whereby Bob stated

> "When you bring your spellings in and you get ten out of ten you get to go to Percy Ingles [a local bakery] and get any cake you want", along with Logan saying

"They [staff] teach you how to behave so you can learn".

In these excerpts one can see the use of extrinsic rewards to motivate and engage academic achievement, along with the use of the school's behavioural policy to "teach" pupils "how to behave" – something that is done to them. Once again, pupils do not speak of taking responsibility for their own development.

8.7.3 "I AM good at things"
At the time of the BM sessions the school's offer of extra-curricular clubs had already begun. This was subsequent to earlier staff feedback in the 2012 audit and CI collaborators' input, acknowledging the need to support and encourage pupils' skills and strengths. Pupils talked about participating in clubs and named activities they do outside of school hours that were provided by the school as part of this new, extra-curricular offer. Pupils could identify the types of activities offered in clubs; ICT, games, multi-media and judo, for example. They were able to describe the purpose these clubs had, for instance, having fun and supporting their needs such as exercise (the basics; Hart et al, 2007, p.42) and having an interest (p.116).

More importantly, according to the resilience evidence base, Adrian saw clubs as raising pupils' aspirations, saying

> *"It's like what [pupil] said cos like they help you do your work and then when you get stuck, they help you with that and like if you want to be a scientist or an art person or a footballer, they will take you there and they will help you and you can be whatever you want".*

Adrian's contribution of "…you can be whatever you want", also links closely to the RF strategy of mapping out a life plan (Hart et al, 2007, p.93) and the midday supervisor's thoughts shared in the CI session. By exposing pupils to experiences and opportunities that are broad and creative, the school is enabling them to become familiar with activities and skills they may have strengths in and wish to pursue further in the future.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, expressed participation in clubs as an opportunity to

> *"…get back on your feet".*

She clearly felt that clubs were a chance for her to start over, or perhaps re-engage; a possible support strategy for her when she was struggling.

8.7.4 "This School Feels Like a Big Family"
Pupils made comments during the BM sessions that indicated evidence of developing positive relationships being a contributory factor to their resilience. They cited teachers helping them to learn the skills of forming and maintaining social relationships more effectively. Pupils were able to specify certain behaviours teachers used to enable them to calm down and manage their feelings more effectively (Hart et al, 2007, p.118) on a daily basis. When analysing this data we thought the staff helping pupils to self-regulate by

calming down was teaching them how to manage in social situations they found difficult. For example, Paul stated

> *"They [staff] tell you not to be rough…and they say 'Have five minutes to calm down'",*

Andrew went on to say

> *"He [teacher] says time to calm down and it's helpful".*

He furthered this, stating that adults help to build friendships between pupils in the school

> *"The adults help you make friends, like if you're having trouble, they might say 'Why can't you play together?' and sometimes, if you like the person you're playing with, you'll play with them like the time I was playing and I made friends with some kids in Juniper [class name]" (Andrew).*

How staff keep relationships going (Hart et al, 2007, p.70) in the school is exemplified by Bob feeling they show an attitude of caring towards pupils:

> *"They [teachers] get some tissue for you so you can wipe your eyes and they might get some water for you to have a drink…this school feels like a big family".*

This emotional and social developmental input was not only staff-pupil directed, as pupils also felt that they were capable of helping others positively. Greg's input expresses this:

> *"If you're doing something, or if someone is doing something and they're really good at it, you help them, you calm them down, and the teacher says 'Thank you for helping'".*

Logan felt the same, telling me

> *"I help others do their work. I am helpful because they are my friends and…I help people, they are my friend…when you do something, if they fall down and they cut their self, you…tell people what's happened and then that's a kind thing".*

Bob very clearly highlights the bi-directional nature of caring at the school, saying

> *"We [pupils] take care of teachers too",*

with Adrian concurring with

> *"…teachers look after us".*

This is particularly interesting, given that, as previously discussed, many pupils are excluded from social experiences and come to the school with few or tenuous relationships (see Chapter Three). They may be referred from 77 mainstream schools in the borough, limiting the likelihood of another pupil from their mainstream school, regardless of even being in the same year group, attending Eleanor Smith School with them. Pupils articulating that they have friends at this school shows that they have had to learn how to make and sustain friendships in this context. They have been excluded from their mainstream schools, and typically from their local communities.
After coming to the school, they are able to express how they show they can care for others and to verbalise strategies they themselves are able to use to facilitate this. Their use of

words such as "look after us", "I am helpful", "family" and "you help them" show pupils' views and experiences of the importance of staff assisting them to self-soothe and calm down (Hart et al, 2007, p.118) in circumstances they would normally find difficult. This theme relates directly to the resilience research base included in RF strategies, such as the more healthy relationships the better (p.72), develop life skills (p.98), leaning on others when necessary (p120), promoting an understanding of others (p.131) and making friends (p.80). Relationships are an essential aspect of all of these strategies that are known to contribute to resilience development in children. Pupils clearly feel they are learning social and emotional skills that help them develop relationships with others.

8.8   Barriers to Resilience Development

Pupils did not identify any barriers to, or suggestions as to how staff may better support them to do their best in the BM sessions.

Evidence of Change

Referring to Figure 8.1 presented at the beginning of this Chapter, some of the themes that emerged from the data sets had commonalities and these are collated for comparison. The facilitators illuminated by pupils and staff were covered, at times using different language, but still tying closely together with other data sets. This is evident, for example, in the audit, survey, CI group and BM sessions' feedback, where strategies specific to developing resilience are mentioned. Talents and interests, for example, are mentioned in the audit as strengths and skills, in the CI as talents and interests and by pupils in section 8.7.3, "I AM Good at Things". Barriers remain the same for staff pre and post RF implementation.

When the data was shared with staff to ensure we had encapsulated their perspectives accurately, it was not met with surprise. Rather, staff discussed ways in which resilience-based practice could be implemented throughout the school, sharing identified themes with all staff and parents in the near future. The amount of overlap between CI members, pupils in the BM sessions and staff in the audit and surveys also gives credence to the commonly held notion of the school having a "way" or, with Bob describing it, feeling "like a big family". This can best be described to the outsider as the ecological model the school offers to meet individual pupils' needs. This approach strongly identifies pupils' contexts and how these can be supported. Key strategies that are evidenced in the resilience literature base, such as coping, relationships, working closely with partners and celebrating achievement were already part of the school's practice. However, when beginning to use the RF staff identified the need to address further areas not already considered, such as offering clubs to develop talents and interests. This entailed altering the existing working model of the school. This saw a shift, moving from a behaviourist model being used - whereby the behaviour policy drove the procedures and systems of the school - to the policy complementing, and being part of the whole school implementing the RF, addressing pupils' needs ecologically (see Chapter Ten).

Practice Changes

The results from this action research with staff and pupils have had a direct impact on practice; a Resilience Development Action Plan (RDAP) as referred to in Chapter Ten (see Appendix Thirteen) for the school was agreed. Of most interest is the shift from staff

referring initially to very behaviourist methods of supporting pupils in 2012 (also evidenced by pupils), to an ecological approach being used, which considers a pupil's context in its entirety. For example, the language used in the audit was about working in isolation, without involving parents, whereas in 2014 it had shifted to working *with* parents, as partners. Mention was also made of enlisting other partners to support pupils in their ecologies in 2014. Possible reasons for these changes are referred to in Chapter Nine.

I believe this shift developed as a direct result of the CI group members' actions which emerged from our collaborative investigation. Targets on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and RDAP (which is more detailed and cross-referenced with the SIP) were contributed to by the group, and this drove the change in daily practice. These plans both addressed concerns that arose from this data analysis. Examples of actions on the SIP included; invitations for identified pupils to attend Breakfast Club and a register taken of participation there taken, inviting parents to participate in a parenting course relevant to their needs, and arranging safe transportation across the borough for secondary pupils (see Chapter Ten).

Both pupils and staff spoke of staff controlling and managing pupil behaviour and learning. Pupils did not appear to recognise their own role in their development and staff equally took responsibility for this. As a result, the target for year two on the RDAP (see Appendix Thirteen) was how to develop a sense of responsibilities and obligations in pupils. Consequently, the school now has a partnership with a local children's hospice, whereby pupils at Eleanor Smith School fundraise and make personal donations to terminally ill children who live in their local community (see Chapters Nine and Ten).

The use of language also moved over time with staff initially writing about identifying pupils' skills and strengths in the audit, and then referring more specifically to developing talents and interests. The shift was from experiential, 'common sense' knowledge to that based on the evidence base of what works. Becoming familiar with this language and what the strategies look like for children in daily practice was supported by the school referring to the Framework in daily meetings; a direct recommendation from the CI's action research (see Chapter Four).

Another example of practice change came from pupil and staff input alike. The importance of having aspirations was highlighted by pupils in the BM sessions and staff in the CI meetings, when they discussed the importance of mapping out life plans. The language used by a pupil and a member of staff was almost verbatim, with the pupil saying that clubs "help us be whatever we want to be", and the member of staff stating that by mapping out life plans, the school is enabling pupils "to be what they want to be". The extra-curricular club offer was in its infancy and was later included in the RDAP as a year one target to be co-ordinated, for which a CI member took responsibility. Further discussion of this follows in Chapter Nine.

Constant Constraints

Throughout the research process uncertainty about how to work with the Framework was identified by staff as a barrier to developing resilience in pupils. The concerns expressed by some staff regarding feelings of uncertainty are addressed on an on-going basis. Staff actively refer to the RF on a daily basis in their practice, along with being involved in training

and supporting other schools to adopt this model. The Thrive approach (Thrive, 2015) has also been adopted as a result of staff identifying how to balance curriculum demands with measuring and providing for the necessary developmental support pupils are enrolled in the school to benefit from. How these constraints may be addressed in practice is discussed in Chapters Nine and Ten.

Summary

This chapter has presented the facilitators of, and barriers to, developing resilience in children with complex needs, as staff and pupils have identified them. It has demonstrated how staff practice changed over time, from mostly relying on a behavioural model of working pre RF implementation, to a more ecological approach, post RF implementation. Small, resilient moves (Hart et al., 2007) are evident in staff practice, both in their and pupil reports. A shift in the use of language was also apparent over time, which appeared to strengthen staff daily practice. The constraints to using resilience-based practice more consistently and confidently were highlighted. Part Four of this thesis, "Closing the Gap – Lessons for the Future", is presented next. Within this, Chapter Nine outlines the resilience literature that explains these findings. Contributions made by both staff and pupils, from all data sets, have informed the whole school approach that is now being taken by this school. Staff work collaboratively to support pupils, meeting about and referring specifically to the RF to do so. They highlight the strengths a pupil has that can be built upon, along with what other strategies could be used to address difficulties in their ecologies. Chapter Ten discusses how this research has contributed to the development of a now nationally used approach, called Academic Resilience (BoingBoing, 2014). The school has made a journey of pioneering the Academic Resilience Approach (ARA), and it has been disseminated locally and nationally subsequent to completion of this research project. Suggestions for application of the findings at school systems and educational policy levels are also presented in Chapter Ten.

Part 4

Closing the Gap – Lessons for the Future

Chapter Nine: Discussion of Findings: Understanding the Outcomes

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of my research, practice anecdotes from the data and evidence from the literature base that supports these. To recap, the research questions were:

1. Does using resilience-based practice support children with complex needs to achieve positive outcomes?

2. What are the mechanisms facilitating these outcomes?

3. What mechanisms act as barriers to embedding resilience-based practice?

Facilitators that enabled resilience in pupils, along with barriers to this, were identified in Chapter Eight. This Chapter outlines the mechanisms (see Chapter Eight & Definitions and Terms for "mechanisms") that contributed to the outcomes illuminated in the qualitative and quantitative evidence. Pupils' improved social and emotional progress scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire ((SDQ) see Appendix Two) were statistically significant as discussed in Chapter Seven. The quantitative data presented in Chapter Seven shows that attendance improved, although not statistically significantly. Teacher assessments of academic attainment indicate that pupils made progress but did not achieve the national expectations set by the Department for Education (DfE). Research clearly demonstrates that this is not surprising, given the complex challenges pupils in this setting face as outlined in Chapter Two. The qualitative data generated by pupils and staff highlights mechanisms that contributed to pupil outcomes. A key finding of this work was that an ecological (see Chapter Three & Figure 3.1), whole school approach which supports resilience in children with complex needs can contribute to positive outcomes for them. This Chapter explores the interface between evidence from the literature and these findings.

An ecological, fourth wave resilience research view asserts that combinations of strategies, or mechanisms can interact as a 'package' of support (Masten, 2007). A critical realist perspective of the world is that it is an open system where multiple mechanisms interplay and affect each other. The two frameworks complement each other's contentions, as described in Chapter Four. Critical realisms' explanatory processes of abstraction and retroduction were used within an action research cycle to illuminate the findings (see Chapters Four & Six). Staff collaborated using this approach to elucidate how they thought resilient moves (Hart, Blincow and Thomas, 2007; Hart & Aumann, 2017) they made enabled them to develop practice that pupils found supportive of their resilience. Throughout this Chapter, these resilient moves are situated alongside the strategy or conceptual arena that contains them in the Resilience Framework (RF) and are referenced accordingly, specifying page number. Appendix One is attached for reference. How mechanisms at varying levels of pupils' ecologies may have interplayed to produce the findings is discussed throughout, and reference can be made to Figure 3.1 and Chapter Three for this. Practice examples that came from this research are shared in this Chapter. Possible solutions to the barriers staff identified to implementation of the RF are outlined when I present implications for future practice in Chapter Ten.

Facilitators of Resilience: Closing the Gap at the Microsystemic Level

Evidence from the data of mechanisms that contributed to improved outcomes for pupils that helped 'close the gap' (see Dyson, Gallanaugh, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2010; see Chapter Two) are outlined in the following section. These were identified as; Elizabeth stating that the school "helps [them] be better", as evidenced in improved social and emotional scores data in Chapter Seven, developing a sense of belonging in pupils, interpreted from their reports of the school feeling like "a big family" as Bob described it in Chapter Eight, attendance and attainment data improving (making learning as successful as possible, Hart et al., 2007 p.90), as shown in Chapter Seven, reflected in Adrian's reporting "It's important to get a good education", and finally, fostering talents and interests through extra-curricular opportunities with another pupil stating "I AM good at something". These are all facilitators of resilience, the mechanisms for which interplay at the microsystemic level of pupils' ecologies, referred to in Chapter Three, and are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Improving Social and Emotional Wellbeing Ecologically: *"This school helps us be better"*

The quantitative findings presented in Chapter Seven show that SDQ scores for pupils between May 2013 and May 2014 improved statistically significantly from "some concern" in 2013 to between "medium concern" and "mostly doing well" in 2014. It appears that one mechanism which supported this was pupils experiencing positive relationships in the school, as this fostered a sense of well-being and of their perceptions of being cared for. In the Body Mapping sessions Bob stated "This school feels like a big family". Pupils identified that healthy relationships are important and that there is a reciprocal ethos of caring between staff and pupils. This appeared to be interpreted by pupils as contributing to them "being better".

Social exclusion can be an issue with which young people with complex needs struggle, as Friedli (2009) outlines in her report on mental health and inequalities for children. Some pupils come to Eleanor Smith School with limited peer relationships from their mainstream schools or their wider communities. Due to the nature of their difficulties, they are often excluded from after school clubs and holiday programmes, as outlined in Chapter Three. In her research that included both staff and pupil perspectives in schools, Yeung (2012, p.680) states "Friendship is believed to promote social development, provide students with emotional stability and enhance their resilience to life's challenges". The resilience literature base is clear about the importance of positive relationships in schools, along with perceptions of care and compassion (Crosby, Day, Baroni & Somers, 2015) and the positive impact this has on mental health. Given some pupils' prior experiences of relationships, it appears the work done in this setting counteracts feelings of isolation or rejection identified in the literature base.

Another mechanism pupils identified which contributed to positive relationships in the school was staff helping them to self-regulate and calm down. MacCobb, Fitzgerald and Lanigan-O'Keefe (2014) explain this finding in their research on the impact on pupil learning and relationships when adults modelled how to manage their own behaviour. Smith Harvey (2007) purports that when children have self-management skills, they are more likely to build positive relationships that are essential to their immediate and future well-being. Pupils also valued adults assisting them to reflect on and manage their behaviour (Hart et

al., 2007) and to help them take responsibility for, and to learn from, this (help the person to know her/himself, Hart et al., 2007, p.134). As I previously outlined in Chapters One and Eight, the school had used a behavioural model (see Definitions & Terms) historically to manage pupil's difficulties. This shifted after implementation of the RF (see Appendix One) to an ecological model, along with use of Thrive (Thrive, 2015; see Chapter Eight) strategies which supported their social and emotional needs.

The benefits of reflecting on social difficulties in school environments is endorsed strongly by resilience research, such as that of Hart et al. (2007) where "promoting understanding of others" (p.131) and "helping the person to know her/himself" (p.134) are endorsed as resilience-building strategies. Ungar (2005) also asserts that having secure intrapersonal reflective skills has a positive impact on resilience. Moving from a behavioural perspective where little reflection on developing these skills occurs, to one whereby calming down and self-soothing (Hart et al., 2007, p.118), along with identifying and solving problems (p.112) supports the development of these skills (Thrive, 2015). Added together, these mechanisms appear to contribute to Elizabeth's perception expressed in Chapter Eight that they are "being better". I now present a practice example, using the critical realist framework of context plus mechanisms equals outcomes (Pawson, 2013) to consider the dynamics at play which may have contributed to improvement for one pupil. Table 9.1 summarises the practice-based vignettes shared in this Chapter using Pawson's (2013) framework of context plus mechanisms equal outcomes. Micro (individual), meso (school, peers, family) and exosystemic (media, neighbours, parent's work, extended family) levels of mechanisms interacting in an ecological context are also outlined in this table. How the ecological model and critical realism's in-depth investigation into mechanisms at work within children's ecologies complement the other was outlined in Chapter Four and is demonstrated in Table 9.1, which follows.

Ecological Layer	RF Conceptual Arena	Context ✚	Mechanism ➖	Outcome
Micro	Foster interests, develop relationships, basics supported, tap into good influences, help self-organisation	9 year old, soiling, unhappy demeanour, aggressive to peers, socially isolated	Visual timetable self-care list, clothing and hygiene in safe place for use, mentoring via computer club	Pupil smiling, playing football again, more hygienic, peers approaching him to play, aggression reduced
Micro, meso	Tap into good influences, responsibilities, planning for the future, enlisting, foster interests, predict a good experience of something new	14 year old, attendance decreasing, school engagement low, peer relationships weakening	Organise box-a-thon, responsible for raising money, approach senior staff to persuade/importance valued, contributions by mum and counsellor	Attendance increased, parent more engaged, leads lunchtime boxing club, increase in peer relationships and school engagement, medication reviewed
Micro, meso, exo	Enlisting, tap into good influences, commitment, conserving, keep healthy relationships going	Staff concerned about pupils being initiated by local gangs, not engaging with Newham Police, attendance decreasing, social media use negative and legally inappropriate	Visit to Camden police station, differing interaction from typical ones with school and Newham police officers, one to one mentoring	Improved attitudes toward police, one pupil aspiring to join the police post college, improved attendance, less gang related discussion at school

Table: 9.1 Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes in Findings

The mental well-being of a nine-year-old pupil whom staff shared concerns for was supported by setting up a computer club, mentored by an older pupil. This afforded him the opportunity to experience positive relationships in an environment targeted at his area of interest. He had been exhibiting low affect, was beginning to become aggressive with his peers, and had started to soil himself at school. Staff identified that his low demeanour and concerning behaviours were indicating feelings of unhappiness and possible depressive symptoms, coupled with the potential for social exclusion.

As a result of this context staff discussed resilient moves that they could make for, and with, this pupil. A Year 10 pupil was engaged to mentor the nine-year-old in a computer club (tap into good influences, Hart et al., 2007, p.67, engage mentors p.91). These pupils shared a strong interest in computer programming and it was arranged for them to develop their own web site, facilitated by the school's computer technician (fostering interests p.116, keeping relationships going p.70,). The pupil's teacher put a visual timetable of the steps he needed to take if he soiled himself at school in a discrete place (help self-organisation p.95,). The school provided him with clean underpants, wet wipes, deodorant and tracksuit bottoms to support his hygiene and social needs (the basics p.42).

Observable outcomes for this pupil were noted by staff within four weeks, with him smiling again, and joining in playground games. The mechanisms that appeared to have generated these outcomes (McEvoy & Richards, 2006), as discussed in Chapter Four, are presented in Table 9.1. Hart, Gagnon, Eryigit-Madzwamuse, Cameron, Aranda and Heaver (2016) quote this particular approach as an example of good practice, stating that "Changes were made to the school day that meant children from disadvantaged backgrounds were able to make

choices that increased their chances of going on to further studies or gaining employment" (Hart et al., 2016, p.8).

It stands to reason that if children with complex needs are included in caring communities that cater for their needs sensitively outcomes should improve for them, as research completed by the Social Exclusion Task Force ((SETF) 2007) demonstrates. In her work on fostering resilience and achievement through school and family relationships, Bryan (2005 p. 220) describes how protective, resilience-promoting factors may be enhanced by "…caring and supportive adult relationships, opportunities for meaningful student participation in their schools and communities, and high parent and teacher expectations regarding student performance and future success". Post RF implementation, staff were actively (not just intuitively) encouraging targeted matching of themselves to pupils, depending on need and strength of relationship.   Multiple researchers in the field have identified strong social supports and relationships as being resilience-promoting (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgitt and Target, 1994; Gilligan, 1999; Werner in Goldstein & Brooks, 2004). Positive relationships and feeling like part of a "big family" appeared to be an outcome that contributed to higher SDQ scores for these pupils. These perceptions may have also positively impacted on pupils' sense of belonging to the school, discussed in the following section.

Developing a Sense of Belonging: *"This school feels like a big family"*
In Chapter One I described my interest in the potential positive impact any adult in the school could have on pupils. The importance of one significant adult as a protective factor in a child's life that enhances resilience is clear in the literature (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Fonagy et al., 1994; Hart & Heaver, 2015; West Stevens in Ungar, 2005; see Chapter Three). This is especially so for the pupils at Eleanor Smith School, with varying and multiple needs. Involving all staff in resilience building approaches in schools, regardless of role, has been highlighted recently by the Department of Health ((DoH) 2015), Hart and Heaver (2015) and the Mental Health Taskforce (2016). Mather and Ofiesh (in Goldstein & Brooks, 2004, p.247) who undertook work on promoting resilience in children with learning difficulties, write "Supportive adults or mentors are able to foster trust and bolster the self-esteem of children…Oftentimes teachers in the school environment can serve as protective factors for children".

Peer to peer mentoring had not been instigated in the school prior to RF implementation. Having supportive relationships (the computer technician) wrapped around him in the intervention provided the nine-year-old pupil with good influences and more healthy relationships (Hart et al., 2007). Gilligan (2000) supports this practice, quoting evidence from Werner and Smith's (1982) early resilience research which demonstrated the benefit of relationships with teachers and other adults for young people coming from difficult home circumstances. The findings from this thesis show that involving all adults in a whole school approach appears to bolster feelings of security, acceptance and belonging by pupils. Prior to implementing the Framework in this setting staff would not have considered involving staff other than teachers or support workers with a pupil to directly support them.

Prior to this research commencing, many staff working in the school already had positive, caring relationships with pupils. Knowledge of the evidence base assisted senior leaders to

reinforce this continually, encouraging all staff to be mindful of actively promoting positive relationships with pupils. The potential schools have to provide a pool of committed adults is clear (Schonert-Reichl, 2000). Luthar and Brown (2007, p.450) also support the significance of adults in schools in their research, stating that "There is recurrent evidence of the powerful benefits of supportive school teachers, not just for children's social and emotional adjustment but also for their academic performance". Masten (2014) reaffirms this, asserting that resilience-promoting mechanisms are not remarkable or outstanding in any way. She writes that mechanisms that promote resilience in children appear to have a particularly strong relational element to them (Masten, 2014).

The quote in Chapter Eight, "This school feels like a big family", comes from Bob who started the sentence by saying "They [staff] get some tissues for you so you can wipe your eyes [after a difficulty] and they might get some water for you to have a drink…" The mechanism of perceived care and kindness from staff to pupils is clearly important. I assert that these mechanisms existed in the school prior to RF implementation. However, the importance of them may have been enhanced as staff became more aware of the potential impact of them as their awareness of resilience-based practice and research increased. The research of Lynch and Baker (2005) and Thrive (Thrive, 2015) contend that pupils do not only engage with schooling at an intellectual level, but that they also engage with it emotionally. Crosby et al. (2015) reinforce this assertion, maintaining that taking the time to understand pupils and the possible underpinning reasons for their difficulties contributed to compassionate relationships and a culture of care and acceptance (Hart et al., 2007 p.25).

The importance of all staff implementing the RF is highlighted in the "virtual school tour" as a summary to this chapter. Administrative staff are typically the first people pupils and parents see when they enter a school. A warm, personal welcome sets the tone (DfE, 2015). So too do the cooks' interactions with pupils at lunchtime, as the cook identified in a Collaborative Inquiry session (see Chapter Eight). The site supervisor's recognition of a child sitting alone in the playground every morning and finding a job to do alongside him can have a positive impact on that child's attendance and engagement in school. Pupils experience and respond to these mechanisms that are part of their lived realities, as a critical realist epistemology asserts, referred to in Chapter Four. Kershner and McQuillan (2016) reinforce these findings, whereby involving all staff in new programme implementation increases the likelihood of it being adopted and used more successfully in daily practice. This is further discussed in Chapter Ten as a recommendation from this work.

Interestingly, the "family feel" of the school is further demonstrated in the bi-directional perception of this relationship, with a pupil saying "…teachers look after us and we look after them" (see Chapter Eight). The reciprocity of relationships at the school contributes to pupils' sense of belonging there (Smith Harvey, 2007). Having a secure sense of belonging is a key resilience-promoting strategy (Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts and Peereboom 2016; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Frederick…Elias, 2003). Yeung (2012) reinforces this in her research, whereby she states that school practice is most effective when policies and procedures support the active encouragement of fostering a sense belonging in pupils' school communities. Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle and Hardie (2004) conducted research on how best to promote and build resilience in primary schools. They argue that

schools are in a strong position to foster this sense of belonging in pupils, not only to their school, but to their wider communities also (Stewart et al., 2004).

Another strategy the school implemented that fosters a sense of belonging was that of pupils remaining in tutor groups from years eight to 11. This meant membership in tutor groups remained constant throughout the secondary phase of pupils' school careers (keeping relationships going, Hart et al., 2007 p.70). Individual pupils had their 'own' space in the school where they shared breakfast and were reunited after lunchtime before going into the next lesson, and again returning to be together at the end of the school day. This allowed for consistent follow up of any issues (understanding boundaries, Hart et al., 2007 p.108) that may have arisen for them through the day, positive or otherwise. It also allowed the adults to monitor pupils closely, knowing them intimately over a sustained period of time (keep relationships going, commitment, Hart et al., 2007 p.70). This model permitted the tutor group to spend time together reflecting on their day (promote understanding of others Hart et al., 2007, p.131, and help the person to know her/himself p.134), and to participate in more social and less academically focused time (see Chapter Eight) as a small cohort, daily.

Having a sense of belonging in the wider community was identified as another facilitator of resilience. As previously reviewed in Chapters One and Three, many of the pupils attending Eleanor Smith School experience social exclusion within the family, school, community, political and economic levels of their experiences. Another strategy used to counter this is developing their sense of responsibilities and obligations towards others (Bryan, 2005; Hart et al., 2007). During the time of this research, this aspect of resilience promotion was developed through initiating a relationship with a local hospice for terminally ill children. The resilience literature base guided this initiative, with staff recognising the importance of pupils feeling connected to others and 'giving something back' (Stewart et al., 2004). Two activities which fulfil this are pupils donating and delivering their own disused toys to the hospice at Christmas time, and raising money through an annual sponsored walk that they organise.

Greenberg et al. (2003, p. 468) support the importance of a sense of belonging to one's wider community asserting that "…efforts for young people are most beneficial when they are coordinated with explicit attempts to enhance their competence, connections to others, and contributions to their community…These positive outcomes serve both as protective factors that decrease problem behaviors and as foundations for healthy development." This relationship with the hospice addresses not only pupils' feelings of belonging to the school, but also to their community. They know they are active agents in their local area and that they make valid contributions to their wider ecology. Gilligan (2000, p.41) reinforces how important having a strong sense of belonging (at family, school and community levels) is to children, asserting that it can enhance academic performance, motivation and emotional well-being. Thus far, I have outlined possible mechanisms that facilitated pupil's improved social and emotional experiences in the school. The evidence presented in Chapter Seven outlines that there were also improvements in their academic progress and attendance. A discussion of mechanisms that may have contributed toward this now follows.

Attendance = Attainment: "It's important to get a good education"

Pupils with SEMH difficulties typically have worse school attendance than their peers (DfE, 2017a; Ofsted, 2010; see Chapter Two). Participating pupils' school attendance was compared in July 2013 and March 2014. The shift was positive, but not statistically significant as is shown in Chapter Seven. This may be because pupils' attendance figures were already high pre-RF implementation, averaging 90.10%. This had increased to 92.30% upon the second measure of pupil attendance, indicating an overall improvement. Despite this, pupils' attendance still did not meet the 96% national expectation set by the DfE. In 2017 the DfE reported that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are five times more likely to be persistent absentees from school (DfE, 2017a). Taylor (2012) and the DfE (2016b.) write that research in the United Kingdom (UK) shows a clear link between poverty and school attendance, stating that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are even less likely to narrow the achievement gap between themselves and their peers if they do not attend school regularly. It would be of interest to review participating pupils' attendance in their subsequent school careers, once resilience-based practice became more embedded in the school. Coupled with high absenteeism, the likelihood of being Fixed Term Excluded (FTE) is also markedly higher if a child has Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties (DfE, 2014). In 2015/16, the national average for exclusions of pupils with SEMH in England was 12.4%, at Eleanor Smith, it was 11.1% (see Table 9.2).

Regular school attendance may not be an 'achievement' for children without complex needs. It may, however, be one of the largest successes a child with SEMH difficulties has made. Persistent absence is much higher for pupils in special schools nationally (9.1%) than it is for state funded primary (4.0%) and secondary (5.2%) schools (DfE, 2017a). When compared to the national average for persistent absence, Newham special schools' absence figures are high (see Table 9.2; Jones, 2017a. & b.). Persistent absence for pupils at Eleanor Smith is 12%, compared to the national figure of 14.7% for pupils in SEMH special schools (Jones, 2017a.). While attendance at Eleanor Smith does not meet the 96% national expectation that would render the school an Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) judgement of 'outstanding', it is lower than for pupils with SEMH difficulties nationally (see Table 9.2). I suggest from pupil and staff feedback that the strong identified sense of belonging to the school may have contributed to higher than average (when compared to national SEMH pupil attendance) attendance at Eleanor Smith.

	Persistent Absence	Fixed Term Exclusions
All Pupils Nationally	10.5%	11.8%
SEMH Nationally	14.7%	12.4%
ESS Pupils	12.0%	11.1%

Table 9.2: Attendance and Exclusion Data from the London Borough of Newham Comparing Pupils with SEMH Difficulties to non-SEN Pupils (DfE, 2017a.; Jones, 2017a., 2017b.).

Similar findings held true for pupils' attainment. Their academic achievement over time showed that all participating pupils had made progress. The DfE's national expectation for pupil progress at the time of this research was two sublevels' increase per year (see Chapter Seven; Definitions & Terms). Fifty per cent of pupils involved achieved this expectation in English and 24% of them did so in maths between July 2013 and July 2014. This outcome is

not surprising, given the progress data for children with SEMH outlined in Chapter Two (e.g. DfE 2011; 2014). Despite the DfE (2014) acknowledging pupils with special educational needs were four times more likely to be persistent absentees compared to pupils without special needs, they are expected to meet the same academic standards as their peers without additional needs. Data accessed from the London Borough of Newham's (LBN) Strategic Commissioning and Intelligence Team (see Jones, 2017a. & b.) clearly demonstrates the difference in academic outcomes for children with SEMH needs, compared to their non-SEN counterparts (See Table 9.3).

	% Made Expected Progress for non-SEN Newham pupils	% Made Expected Progress for SEMH Pupils in Newham	Newham SEMH Pupils' Test Achievement
Early Years*	80%	38%	42% lower
Phonics Check End of Year 1	92%	68%	24% lower
End of KS1* SATs* results	75%	41%	34% lower
End of KS2* SATs* results	73%	51%	22% lower

Table 9.3: Achievement Data from the London Borough of Newham Comparing Pupils with SEMH Difficulties to non-SEN Pupils (Jones, 2017a. and b.).
*see Terms and Definitions

These findings raise the issue of what can be done to improve attendance and attainment, and quickly, for children with complex needs. A practice example for other schools of how this was achieved at Eleanor Smith School, as demonstrated by my research, follows.

Although attendance did not show a statistically significant improvement, as presented in Chapter Seven, efforts to increase school engagement were demonstrated by some staff for individual pupils. Hart et al. (2007, p.90) endorse making learning as successful as possible. Findings of improved attendance and/or attainment would be an indicator of Eleanor Smith doing this for pupils. In practice, this was evidenced for a secondary aged pupil using RF strategies. H was a Year 9 pupil who was exhibiting a pattern of repeated lateness, as noted in the school data, with overall decreasing attendance. It was clear his engagement in school life was lessening and this was concerning for staff. Resilient moves made by the deputy head to support H were aimed at motivating and inspiring him (predict a good experience of something new, Hart et al., p.79). Together, they wrote a persuasive letter to the head teacher, stating the case for pupils being able to access a boxing punch bag during break times, as several of the pupils had an interest (p.76) in boxing and mixed martial arts. H was given responsibility for raising the money to purchase the equipment by organising a punch-a-thon that other pupils would take part in (responsibilities, p.76). H asked a local gym that pupils had access to (tap into good influences, p.69) for permission to use their facilities at no cost. In exchange the school would promote the gym in the school newsletter. Prior to RF implementation such an 'intervention' would not have occurred at the school.

H's mother and his counsellor were also consulted (enlisting, Hart et al., 2007, p.36) to discuss any other difficulties that may be hindering his attendance. It was agreed to ask the worker at the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to review his medication (there are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, p.141), as this appeared to be having limited effectiveness for him as the day wore on. An action plan was

jointly agreed to address these issues. Outcomes achieved were that the pupil became more willing to engage with his learning, his attendance increased and his 'status' among his peers, as the event organiser, improved (keep relationships going, p.70). It assisted him to take responsibility for planning for the future (p.93), coupled with giving back to others (obligations p.76; Stewart et al., 2004). As Hart et al. (2007) point out engaging in community service is a key contributor to individual happiness, being a larger overall contributor to this than wealth. These mechanisms appeared to interact together to generate positive outcomes for H (Yeung, 1997; see Chapter Four).

It is, however, difficult to delineate exactly which mechanisms, and in which combinations may have contributed to this for H. Roisman, Padron, Sroufe and Egeland's (2002 p.1216) definition of resilience may help us to understand why this may be the case where they write "…resilience is an emergent property of a hierarchically organized set of protective systems that cumulatively buffer the effects of adversity…" What we can learn from H's experiences is that practitioners can continue to try various mechanisms at various points to see what combination may be most successful at that time and for that individual. According to Roisman et al. (2002), over the course of time, these mechanisms may accumulate to buffer further adversity. See Table 9.1 for details of the mechanisms that possibly worked together to produce the outcome of H's improved attendance.

There is a link between poverty, poor school attendance and poorer academic achievement for some children, as referred to in Chapter One (DfE, 2017a; Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF), 2007). This is not to suggest a truism that all children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend school regularly or achieve well academically (Smith Harvey, 2007). However, schools tackling poor attendance is critical for life outcomes for children with complex needs. Taylor (2012, p.1) expands on this, stating "The evidence shows that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically and they are more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET, see Definitions & Terms) when they leave school". Wilkinson and Pickett (2018) report that young people in the United Kingdom are NEET more often than young people in other rich countries by comparison. I suggest that it is important to be mindful of barriers in children's ecologies. Adults need to support any pre-existing difficulties young people may have by working with them to ensure attendance and engagement at school, ensuring learning is as successful as possible (Hart et al, 2007, p.90). Resilience-based practice can successfully achieve this, as staff identified in this research. How Ofsted may assess the impact of this practice is discussed in Chapter Ten.

Fostering Talents and Interests: *"I AM good at something"*
Evidence from this thesis clearly highlights the importance of taking a strengths-based approach to improve outcomes for children with complex needs. The very paradigm of resilience is salutogenic (Garrett, 2015; Antonovsky in Cowen, Wyman and Work, 1996). A large body of research backs up the findings from my thesis in relation to pupils fostering talents and interests. Both Masten (2001) and Walker, Hart and Hanna (2017) champion practice which challenges the deficit model of traditional psychology, whereby strengths and potential are sought and emphasised. Lerner (2004) asserts that strengths can be integrated with the assets of communities to promote positive change. Edwards and Apostolov (2007, p.74) concur, writing that successful resilience-building programmes "…put

in place protective factors such as…after school provision or mentoring programmes which offer places of safety and help to build a child's sense of responsible self-efficacy".

Fergusson and Horwood (2003, p.5) highlight the importance to young people of developing interests outside of their families, writing "A number of studies have suggested that children from high risk backgrounds who…develop strong interests outside the family…may be more resilient to the effects of family adversity". Gilligan (1999; 2000) points out the importance of after school activities in supporting children's resilience. Murray Nettles, Mucherah and Jones (2000) and Farb and Matjasko (2012) agree, reporting that school age children who participate in after school, extra-curricular activities, perform better academically. Broh (2002) found that the academic achievement of secondary aged pupils who participate in after school sports activities improves.

Prior to implementation of the Framework, extra-curricular activities such as clubs that supported pupil's talents and interests did not exist at the school (see Chapter Eight). This shift was evident in this research with staff using a strengths-based approach to identify and meet pupils' needs through developing their talents (Hart et al., 2007, p.138) and interests (p.116). Using a resilience-promoting model also created a move away from a behaviourist model (see Terms and Definitions) of staff stating "…if you misbehave…the consequence will be…no club", which again means pupils are left out of activities from which they have historically been excluded (see Chapter Two). Despite Greenberg et al.'s (2003) warning about school budgets and the multiple strains upon these in education, the head teacher works creatively to find ways to fund staffing of this out of hours provision. Secondary pupils are paid with high street shopping vouchers to mentor the clubs, thereby having the opportunity to experience "paid" work and the responsibility of this, along with acting as older mentors to the younger pupils (tap into good influences p.69, engage mentors p.91 Hart et al.; Hart et al., 2016).

The evidence from the data at Eleanor Smith School supports the impact identifying and supporting talents and interests can have on pupil engagement, attendance, feelings of achievement and general well-being. When concern is flagged for a pupil, staff members' immediate first step is to identify a strength that can be supported and maximised with the child in question. In Chapter Eight, I quoted a pupil as saying "I AM good at something". Adrian was referring to participating in the school's new offer of after school clubs. Not only can social activity participation have positive impacts on children, research shows it has mental health benefits later in life also. Bourassa, Memel, Woolverton and Sbarra (2017) found that social participation in adults improved depressive symptoms and cognitive functioning in aging adults. In their international review of what schools can do to support resilience in disadvantaged children, Agasisti, Avvisati, Borgonovi & Longobardi (2018) found that involvement in extra-curricular activities promoted pupil engagement at school, while also fostering a sense of belonging in them. Participating in an after-school club, in the context of celebrating success and positively framing self-belief may have contributed to the outcome of improved social and emotional well-being found in this research.

Club participation acted as a mechanism for fostering aspirations and highlighting achievements (Hart et al., 2007 p.96). This perception was shared by pupils in the body mapping sessions and by staff in the collaborative inquiry meetings (see Chapter Eight), when they discussed the importance of mapping out life plans (p.93) and how developing

pupils' talents and interests contributes to this. The language used by a pupil and a member of staff independently of the other was almost verbatim; the pupil saying "…[clubs] help us be whatever we want to be", and the lunchtime supervisor offering that by mapping out life plans based on talents, the school is enabling pupils "to be what they want to be". Mechanisms discussed in this section, such as club participation and developing positive relationships are all examples of changes made at the individual level, but also expanding into that person's microsystem – their school, family and relationships with peers (see Figure 3.1; Chapter Three). These mechanisms appeared to have a positive impact on pupils, evidenced in the outcome of having a strong sense of belonging to the school. The following section reports findings at the mesosystemic ecological level and how resilience-based research explains these, demonstrating how family, siblings, school and peers *interrelate* to contribute to pupils' experiences of resilience promotion.

Facilitators of Resilience: Beating the Odds at the Mesosystemic Level

Staff identified having the opportunity to "talk about this together" (see Chapter Eight) and actively working *alongside* parents as being facilitators of, or mechanisms that interplayed to improve outcomes for children at the mesosystemic (family/peer/school) level of pupils' ecologies discussed in Chapter Three. Evidence from the data and how research explains the findings is discussed in the following sections.

Reflecting on Resilient Moves: *"It's good because we can talk about this together"*

Before staff could implement ecologically based practice at the school, they had to develop their knowledge and appreciation of pupils' contexts. This is referred to as having an 'inequalities imagination' (Hart et al., 2007; Hart & Aumann, 2017). Research in the field tells us that an ecological approach recognises the bi-directional interplay between individual and context that fourth wave resilience researchers, such as Lerner (2004), Masten (2007) and Rutter (1999) all advocate. This interplay is reflected in the ecological model in Figure 3.1. Staff had to begin by understanding and acknowledging the impact that family, peers and school could have on pupils before they could begin to use resilience-based practice in an informed way.

A key finding in this work was staff moving from using a behavioural model (see Definitions & Terms) of practice to implementing an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994). This was evident in the qualitative data, with staff naming strategies in an ecological 'package' of support for pupils. Staff confidence at using the Framework in their everyday practice in the school increased post RF implementation, as presented in Chapter Seven. Daily opportunities to discuss pupils' needs reflectively through use of the action research approach (see Chapters Four & Five) supported this. In their report to the Public Policy Institute for Wales, focusing on emotional health, well-being and resilience in primary schools, Banerjee et al. (2016) assert that whole school approaches may best be implemented when staff have the opportunity to reflect on how school systems operate. Simultaneously, staff shared the vocabulary and strategies of the Framework. Constant communication between staff using the action research cycle (see Figure 6.1; Chapter Six) kept the framework active as a whole school strategy. In their research into factors that contribute to teacher participation in school-based prevention work, Nadeem, Kataoka, Change, Vona, Wong and Stein (2011) support this view. They found that clear communication through reflection is essential for successful whole school programme

adoption (Nadeem et al., 2011). The cycle of reflection using action research continues to be used by staff subsequent to this research completing.

As outlined in Chapters Four and Five, outcomes from using an action research approach strongly indicate that learning together as a team and evaluating and reflecting on practice over time is an effective way of introducing new concepts (Holmlund Nelson, Slavit, Perkins and Hathorn, 2008; Huffman & Kalnin, 2003). Nadeem et al (2011) found that the opportunity for staff to learn from each other across roles is a successful strategy that can be used to reinforce new initiatives in schools. Tillema and van der Westhuizen (2006) state that using a Collaborative Inquiry approach is a powerful shared learning tool for staff to work together and reflect on practice. Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) review of action research states that this methodology is appropriate for sharing organisational learning and improving practice due to its exploratory and inductive nature. According to Wenger-Trayner, Wenger-Trayner, Cameron, Eryigit-Madzwamuse and Hart (2017), using an action research approach allows group members to reflect on practice and to feed the research back into the intervention that is being implemented. This approach supported staff to understand and improve their performance (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007), and therefore, to successfully implement the Framework to achieve better outcomes for pupils.

I argue that the Collaborative Inquiry method assisted staff to deeply explore which mechanisms were effecting change in, or outcomes for pupils, which in turn influenced their practice. When considering what these mechanisms may be, staff needed to think at the three levels of critical realism's view of 'reality' discussed in Chapter Four – the real, the actual and the empirical (Houston, 2010; Scott, 2010). These stratified levels of reality all contribute to pupils' experiences and perceptions of the school and staff practice. The collaborative inquiry sessions questions (see Appendices Five & Six) guided these considerations. Marks (2002) writes that critical realism views the world as an open system where multiple mechanisms interact simultaneously to affect each other, a view supported by the ecological model, along with fourth wave resilience research perspectives (Ungar, 2010). In Chapter Four I asserted that the process of critical realism's abstraction (Yeung, 1997), using an action research cyclical reflection process (see Chapter Six; Figure 6.1) enabled staff to consider these mechanisms in depth. Houston (2010) endorses this, asserting that the researchers can access the "black box" of an intervention to explore how and why interventions may work, and under what circumstances.

Yeung (1997) states that when the use of iterative abstraction is embedded it is known as retroduction (see Chapter Four). According to critical realist researchers, an understanding of what mechanisms and structures are present that have the potential to produce the events (outcomes) is essential (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2017). According to Pawson and Tilley (2004), the ultimate goal of a critical realist approach is to identify deeper levels of explanation and understanding, uncovering mechanisms at work. Retroduction results in moving from describing a phenomenon to determining mechanisms that need to exist to yield that phenomenon (Yeung, 1997). Wenger-Trayner et al. (2017, p.23) maintain that retroduction allows researchers to consider "…what must the world be like for it to produce the outcomes we observe". The action research cycle used in the collaborative inquiry sessions allowed staff to do this and consequently, to uncover the mechanisms interacting to produce the observed outcomes evidenced in these findings.

Banerjee et al. (2016) view whole school approaches as providing opportunities for reflecting on how school systems operate. In my research reflecting on practice changed systems such as the educational paradigm being worked with, and how the school hierarchy itself was viewed; with administrative staff, cooks and site supervisors all actively contributing to and implementing plans for individual pupils at the micro level. This change in practice meant the school system itself had transformed (Mertens, 2016), with any adult having the potential to be the significant person in that child's school life, based upon relational qualities (Masten, 2014) with an ecological, fourth wave resilience approach (Masten, 2007) then being adopted. For children in schools, this involves taking a whole school approach, including all staff reflecting on systems and therefore, on practice.

The research base has called for truly whole school resilience building approaches that involve all adults at a systems level and which will be used for some time (Hart & Heaver, 2015; Hart et al., 2016; Public Health England (PHE), 2015). As discussed in Chapter Three, when the literature base is scrutinised, sometimes what is characterised as a "whole school approach" may be viewed as "false advertising" as it only actually involves teachers and possibly teaching assistants. Hart, Heaver, Brunnberg, Sandberg, MacPherson, Coombe and Kourkoutas (2014) write that a whole school approach should work across the entire school system. Greenberg et al. (2003, p. 472) state "Our review indicates that whole-school approaches to prevention based on evidence-driven interventions show much promise". Over a decade later, researchers such as Hart and Heaver (2015) and Banerjee et al. (2016), along with government departments such as the DfE (2015) and the DoH (2015) are still pursuing the necessity for this. Factors that appear to have enabled a whole school approach to be adopted at Eleanor Smith School are elaborated on in Chapter Ten.

Working alongside Parents: *"She came to his assembly and I thought that was really brave of her"*

In Chapter Eight, enlisting and engaging with parents was identified by staff as crucial in their work. Banerjee et al. (2016) endorse this in their recommendations for successful programme implementation in primary schools following their research on what is most likely to promote emotional health, well-being and resilience. Parental involvement in their children's educational activities is known to be a protective and resilience-promoting mechanism (Clarke, O'Sullivan and Barry, 2010). In the audit feedback (see Chapter Eight), some staff wrote of how they perceived parents not to be taking responsibility for supporting their child. Others identified it being difficult to engage parents at times. The reasons for difficulty engaging parents can be wide ranging (Hill, Stafford, Seaman, Ross & Daniel, 2007). Hodge and Runswick-Cole (2008) and Walker et al. (2017) state that these may include; feeling disempowered by school staff, parents may find the labelling of their child difficult, feeling pressure to conform to professionals' expectations, or feeling that information is not shared with them openly. Bryan (2005, p.219) writes "Oftentimes, parents are regarded by school officials as adversaries instead of supporters of their children's education". Walker et al. (2017) contend that parents often find themselves encountering professionals who discount the rich knowledge they have of their own children. This perception may potentially act as a barrier to staff enlisting and engaging parents as well-informed allies.

Research particularly pertinent to the context of this setting is that of Clarke et al. (2010). They report that low levels of parental engagement with schools are typical in settings where there may be a lack of social cohesion (Clarke, et al., 2010) (possibly contributed to in Newham by high transience; LBN, 2014). In Newham, there is a large proportion of ethnic minority families and lone parents, high unemployment and lower levels of parental education (LBN, 2014). These demographics apply to a high percentage of the families of pupils at Eleanor Smith School. This does not make parental engagement impossible. Rather, it is helpful to have an appreciation of these issues so that they may be addressed successfully (Walker et al., 2017). It may be useful for staff to be mindful of the expense of transports costs for parents to get to meetings, for example. Awareness of this issue means staff need to be more creative, perhaps by their travelling to parents instead of expecting the reverse (DfE, 2015).

The school has a Clinical Psychologist, employed by CAMHS but based in the school, that works with families in their own homes if they prefer this. Her work at Eleanor Smith School varies from the traditional office-based, medical model service of CAMHS. In her previous position, she already adopted the practice of going *to* families and enlisting their insights and support. The practice of furthering this as part of a multi-disciplinary team at Eleanor Smith School, using the RF, attracted her to Newham. By working flexibly with families, she is able to establish relationships and commitment to long term working with them more successfully than may have otherwise been the case.

Post RF implementation, the majority of staff were sharing that they were working alongside parents (Bryan, 2005; enlisting, Hart et al., 2007 p.36). A shift in how staff actively began involving parents by starting at where they are currently in their context, shows "acceptance" (see Chapter Eight), another Noble Truth on the Framework (Hart et al., 2007, p.25). Clarke et al. (2010) encourage practitioners to find alternative ways of engaging parents in schools. An illustration of this is the family liaison worker arranging 'parent buddy' lunches when pupils are newly admitted to the school. This involved introducing parents whose children had attended the school for some time to a parent whose child had only recently been admitted. This gave the 'new' parent an opportunity to discuss any questions, worries or concerns they may have with a parent who had already experienced how the school works. This initiative, along with the flexibility of the school's Clinical Psychologist working alongside parents is fully endorsed by research (Cowen et al., 1996). Hodge and Runswick-Cole's (2008) work predicts that this approach would be successful because it has the potential for parents to feel listened to, for staff to be seen as helpful, and parents were being enabled to achieve the best support for their child's needs. This strategy has been successful to date in this setting and may inform other schools in the future.

Research assists practitioners to understand why parent liaison is so important to resilience promotion in children, especially in disadvantaged contexts. In his work on maximising an ecological approach, Bronfenbrenner (1994) highlights the impact of proximal and distal processes on people. His article on parental involvement and the achievement of children found that the higher the disadvantage in a child's context the more parental input is needed to balance that adversity (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Edwards and Apostolov (2007, p.81) strongly support this, writing "Involving parents and children in disrupting their own

pathways towards social exclusion has the potential to help them to develop expertise in these everyday negotiations as they move across settings and take control of their own lives" (help the person take responsibility for her/himself, Hart et al., 2007, 136). Enlisting others (p.36) may also be a useful strategy to support parents struggling with the impact of their contexts upon themselves and their children.

Cowen et al. (1996) stress the need to actively involve caregivers to support the resilience of highly stressed children living in urban settings. Masten and Gewirtz (2006) concur, stating that positive home-school relationships appear to be a key resilience promoting factor, especially in the case of very disadvantaged children. Stewart et al.'s (2004) research found that the level of home-school partnerships a school promotes directly impacts on pupils' sense of belonging to that school. Increasing parental involvement, guided by the Resilience Framework, has contributed to the findings of better outcomes for pupils. Enlisting adults other than parents (a Noble Truth, Hart et al., 2007, p.36) for the benefit of children with complex needs is also a key element of ecological practice, which is discussed further in the next section.

Facilitators of Resilience: Resilient Moves at the Exosystemic Level

Recruiting others is a consideration (Bryan, 2005; Hart et al., 2007) at the ecological level of children's contexts involving their parent's work, the media, services and agencies and extended family; the exosystemic level. This may take the form of pursuing and developing relationships with other agencies in the community that offer support to children where schools are situated to act as a facilitator. Such agencies may include other schools, mental health services (e.g. CAMHS), voluntary agencies (e.g. mentors), or parent support groups, to name a few. These services and the child and family all interact with each other variously across time (the chronosystem; see Figure 3.1). The importance of this is further discussed in the policy implications section of Chapter Ten, where the policy, or macrosystemic implications of this thesis are considered. A practice example of exosystemic work from the findings is now reviewed for consideration, again using Pawson's (2013) context, mechanism and outcomes scaffolding.

Enlisting Others: *"He's all right"*

Recently the DoH (2015) demanded that schools actively work in partnership with other social and community agencies for the benefit of children (enlisting, Hart et al., 2007, p.36). As stated in Chapter Two, there has been a shift in policies acknowledging the need to work *with* children and families (DoH, 2015; DfE, 2016; National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), 2017). My research findings indicate that work between Eleanor Smith School and the Camden Police branch at an exosystemic could inform educational policy at the macro level (DoH, 2015; see Chapter Ten). Police officers are part of the school community and not seen as external "visitors". Whilst the Newham police officers allocated to the school have positive and supportive relationships with pupils, they are white females who wear a uniform. The officer from Camden is a black male with dreadlocks, wearing civilian clothing. In recognition of the importance of interpersonal relationships, the school now attempts to match key staff to pupils in terms of backgrounds, social and emotional needs and personalities. Some pupils are more likely to be receptive to the Camden officer, while others may be to a female in the same role, for example.

Pupils at the secondary site are largely adolescent boys who can be enamoured with "gang" culture. The Camden officer's physical stature and gender appear to be associated by the pupils with him 'knowing' or appreciating issues they are concerned with. Time spent with him is labelled 'mentoring' by the school and pupils view him as such (engage mentors, Hart et al., 2007, p.91) and not as a threat. He comes to school to speak with them individually on his unpaid days, presents in assemblies and has taken them to his Police branch so they can see the daily running of a station. This helps to demystify many of the experiences they have had of the police service themselves. They describe him as "all right". This appears to work better for the secondary aged pupils at a relational level, the importance of which has been highlighted (Smith Harvey, 2007; Masten, 2014; see Table 9.1).

These mechanisms appear to interplay to produce some positive outcomes for pupils. For this strategy to be successful, interpersonal relationships (Smith Harvey, 2005) between the officer and staff, pupil perceptions of him as an accessible mentor (Hart et al., 2007, p.91) and an openness to working outside typical boundaries (DoH, 2015) are all mechanisms relied upon. Pupils are more open and willing to speak with him. Crosby et al. (2015) inform us that positive social relationships are critical for resilience development in pupils. A member of staff reported in a Collaborative Inquiry session that pupil's glamorising talk of gang culture at school had decreased. One pupil expressed an interest in joining the police force as a future career (mapping out a life plan, Hart et al., 2007, p.93), and the attendance of half of them (six) had improved. This interagency work at the exosystemic level of pupils' contexts is reliant on personal relationships, and an openness and willingness between the school and the individual officer for it to occur.

Despite the policies referred to in Chapter Two over the past 17 years endorsing this type of cross-boundary work, it is still not often supported at the various levels of children's ecologies. Educational policy could be directly informed by such partnership work, which disregards physical boundaries and caters to children's needs on a relational level instead (see Chapters Two and Ten). Perhaps policy makers could consider allocating workers based on skill sets, or assets (a resilience-based approach), instead of allowing budgets and boundaries to dictate where staff are deployed. Services should fit the children and families, as recommended by the DoH (2015) and Walker et al. (2017). Difficulties still remain with enlisting the assistance of others, as staff reported in the findings in Chapter Eight. The difficulties which prohibit such practice from occurring consistently between agencies, along with where it has been successful at Eleanor Smith School, and is discussed more fully in Chapter Ten.

Barriers to Implementation at the Micro and Mesosystemic Levels
Evidence from the data shows that a barrier to implementation of the RF at the individual, peer, education and familial levels of pupils' ecologies was trying to balance curriculum demands with their social and emotional needs. Staff also identified "We all need to be doing this" for implementation of the RF to be more consistent. These two barriers are discussed in the following sections.

Balancing Needs: *"They've GOT to get some GCSEs!"*
Barriers emerged in the findings that staff considered to constrain or minimise the impact of using the Resilience Framework in their practice (see Chapter Eight). The two barriers

discussed were not having enough time to implement the Framework and uncertainty about how to do so. Staff who reported difficulty implementing the Framework relayed feelings of heavy workload pressures and a corresponding perception of limited time in which to meet the requirements of their job. Some staff identified not having enough time allocated to make Framework implementation a priority, especially when compared to curriculum demands. A staff member commented on the survey "It's a great idea, but when do we have time to do this in the school day?" Another reiterated this point, writing "Brilliant…but WHEN?! They've GOT to get some GCSEs!" Staff identified the necessity, especially in a school that serves the needs of children with complex difficulties, to balance the demands between curriculum and holistic development. This balance between academic progress and social development is demanded by Ofsted (2018), for example, and is discussed further in Chapter Ten.

This is a common difficulty many schools across the UK face (DfE, 2017c). Recently, the DfE (Higton, Leonardi, Richards, Choudhury, Sofroniou and Owen, 2017) conducted a voluntary survey of over 3,000 teachers, reported to be a representative sample of the teaching population. Unsurprisingly, given past research in the field, results revealed 93% of respondents stated their workload was "…at least a fairly serious problem" (Higton et al., 2017, p.6). Coupled with this, over three quarters of staff were dissatisfied with the number of hours they worked per week (Higton et al., 2017). This supports a previous DfE survey (Precey, 2015) of 3,500 teachers which evidenced that 89% perceived their workload as a problem. Banerjee et al. (2016, p.11) endorse these findings, stating that the workload agreement for teachers in 2003 transformed "…the teaching role to one more focused on teaching of 'core' academic content, even though there is still the prescription that teachers should 'promote the safety and well-being of pupils'" concurrently.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) write that research shows teachers perceive themselves as having to work faster, with increased workloads, which results in their having less time overall. In their research, they state that preparing for teaching during evenings and weekends, with little time during the day for rest or recovery contributes to perceptions of heavy workloads (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Bousquet's (2012) research outcomes support this. She maintains that curriculum demands constructed through government policy put increasing pressure on teachers (Bousquet, 2012). Bousquet (2012) also states that teachers feel this gives them less time to focus on areas that their pupils may excel in. Hutchings (2015) furthers this, describing teachers being under pressure to teach to targets, and depicting schools as "exam factories".

Factors that contribute to feelings of workload pressure and lack of time include the breadth of teachers' classroom repertoires needing to expand because of developments in the science of teaching, along with adapting instruction to the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds with special needs, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000). Greenberg et al. (2003, p.467) assert that "…schools are expected to do more than they have ever done in the past, often with diminishing resources…schools face unprecedented challenges to educate an increasingly multicultural and multilingual student body and to address the widening social and economic disparities in…society". Eleanor Smith School faces similar challenges, being set within a highly deprived, multi-cultural and multi-lingual borough (LBN, 2014). Research that addresses these practice barriers are considered in the final Chapter.

Collaborative Practice: *"We all need to be doing this"*

While there was a general improvement in staff confidence reported in Chapter Seven, with respect to implementing the Resilience Framework, some staff identified uncertainty about how to apply it as a barrier. They felt that not all colleagues were using the Framework and that they needed time to learn together and evaluate practice to review and change the school system. Banerjee et al.'s (2016) report confirms the usefulness of collective reflection on systems to implementing resilience-promoting programmes in schools. Equally, in her work on effective programme implementation in schools, Yeung (2012) found that when staff were afforded the opportunity to collaborate and learn together the new initiative was embedded more effectively. In these findings, staff felt that by having time to discuss the Framework together as a group, its vocabulary would be shared and used by more colleagues. MacCobb et al. (2014) and Kershner and McQuillan (2016) found that when staff held a shared language when implementing new programmes into their schools the likelihood of success was higher. Staff at Eleanor Smith School identified having a shared language as being a positive contributor to their confidence in implementing the Framework (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

The DfE's (Higton et al., 2017) survey of teachers reports that senior leaders identified prioritising time to work collaboratively as an effective way to learn and implement school strategies; Holmlund Nelson et al. (2008) and Huffman and Kalnin (2003) concur and action research literature further reaffirms this, as outlined in Chapter Four. Zuber-Skerritt (2005, p.174) states that in action research "The researcher actively participates with others in the critical exploration of complex and dynamic issues, which relate to the relationships between people and their physical and socio-cultural environments" and that such activity can transform organisations strategically. Stewart et al. (2004) report that schools with a sense of shared purpose and common goals best support whole school approaches to resilience development in pupils. An action research approach continues to reinforce this sense of shared purpose and collective direction at Eleanor Smith School. This is elaborated on further in Chapter Ten.

Barriers to Implementation at the Macrosystemic Level

A barrier identified by staff at the policy level of pupils' ecologies appeared to be successfully enlisting others to support resilience-based practice in the school. Policies are attempting to endorse and facilitate open partnership work between agencies in children's exosystems (e.g. Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) referred to in Chapter Ten (National Health Service (NHS), 2016)). Evidence from the data that supports this assertion is now highlighted.

Use Tried and Tested Treatments: *"Why bother?!"*

Staff expressed frustration with enlisting other professionals at times, with one asking "Why bother?!" This feeling may be illustrated by the following practice experience. The school works regularly with the local CAMHS that assists children and families in the borough. A high ratio of children that attend Eleanor Smith School are also service users at the local CAMHS. Many of the pupils at the school are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and take medication to alleviate the associated symptoms (see Chapter Two). For varying reasons, some families find it difficult to attend regular ADHD medication

reviews. The DfE (2015) reports CAMHS closing the case of non-attending children, a commonly reported experience for families. At Eleanor Smith School, staff often take children to CAMHS appointments themselves during the day to ensure pupil attendance. In practice, this means staff are removed from their educational responsibilities and children miss learning time.

As a result of the Collaborative Inquiry discussions, staff canvassed pupils with typically poor CAMHS appointment attendance about issues that may contribute to this. The school suggested to CAMHS managers that an employee attend the school to do health and medication reviews. This would allow the school to support pupil attendance, benefit pupil's physical welfare, along with being fiscally and operationally beneficial for both agencies, with fewer missed appointments. The DfE (2015) and BoingBoing (2018) recommend such an approach is taken, with mental health professionals working in schools. In 2017, the DfE recommended that all schools have a mental health specialist employed in schools (DfE, 2017c). The green paper out for consultation in December of 2017, referred to in Chapter Two further builds on these plans (DoH & DfE, 2017). Eleanor Smith School works jointly with the local CAMHS service to provide a Clinical Psychologist as the designated senior leader for mental health and has done so as a result of implementing the RF, prior to 2017 and government direction (DoH & DfE, 2017) for this to occur. The school also employs a counsellor as a result of the findings of this work, where staff identified pupils needing specialist, trained mental health staff to support them.

Disappointingly, CAMHS' response was not as proactive as the school hoped, with the service citing budgetary and staffing considerations that would not allow this initiative to proceed. The CAMHS' "…willingness of individuals to communicate as part of an agreed plan" (Department for Children, Schools and Families (dcsf) 2007b., p.24), previously referred to in Chapter Two appears to be weak, a decade later. This outcome is not surprising because, as Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra and Madge (2004) write, cooperation between government agencies has been inherently difficult for many reasons both historically and currently. This practice is now mandated and CAMHS are required to have a school presence (Murray, 2018). Some of the reasons this has been difficult to achieve are further discussed in Chapter Ten.

Considerations subsequent to the implementation and analysis of the data are now outlined in the following section. A virtual tour of the school's resilience-based practice, uncovered by this research, is then shared to summarise the mechanisms that contribute to the shared experiences of, or outcomes, for pupils.

Limitations and Considerations for the Future
Difficulty by Definition: The Messiness of Complexity
The difficulty of defining what "complex needs" looks like, or may be experienced as, by children was outlined in Chapter Three. For research purposes, defining complex needs is a challenge. I found Aumann and Hart's (2009) conceptualisation of complex needs useful in this research - they consider the contextual effects of poverty, being exposed to prejudice, discrimination or negative attitudes, coupled with other quantifiable challenges, such as learning or psychological difficulties. A critical realist view contends that while the children in this research all share commonalities and reality, they may not all experience this reality

in the same way (Clark, McIntyre and Cruikshank, 2007; see Chapter Four). As Lerner (2004; see Chapter Three) writes, all people are the same, yet in ways, like no other. Despite the complex challenges the children in this research face, it is still possible for researchers to glean an understanding from their shared experiences and to use these findings to inform future work.

Limitations of Measures and Scope

With hindsight it would have been useful to have taken pre and post measures of Fixed Term Exclusions (FTEs) in this research. As highlighted by both the DfE (2011, 2014, 2017) and Ofsted (2010), exclusion rates are consistently higher nationally for pupils with special educational needs, and even more so for those with SEMH (Jones, 2017a; see Chapter Ten). My findings would have been yet more convincing if I could report statistically significant improvements in attendance and nationally expected academic progress, along with a reduction in exclusions. A reduction in FTEs, if indeed that were the case, would further triangulate evidence of resilience-based practice having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils, especially for the group of children most commonly excluded nationally (DfE, 2017a).

It is also conceivable that the statistically significant improvement found in SDQ scores may have been different if the more sensitive instrument of Thrive (Thrive, 2015) had been used (see Chapter Eight). During the time of the research, staff identified that social and emotional progress made by pupils was not accurately represented by the SDQ as an instrument. Staff felt the increments required by the SDQ to be demonstrated by children with complex needs were too great to accurately reflect their progress. Although pupils may in fact be making social and emotional progress, the SDQ was not sensitive enough to capture the small improvements pupils could make.

It should be acknowledged that teacher reports of academic attainment may have been higher or lower than school records show. This potential limitation is, however, ameliorated by the fact that 'levels' are moderated by teachers in monthly meetings so that academic attainment is scrutinised and collectively agreed. It would also be of interest to review the impact of resilience-based practice on pupils' attendance in their subsequent school careers, once it had become more embedded in the school.

The audit of staff confidence was completed at the school prior to the data collection phase of this work (see Chapter Six). Staff had been asked to complete the audit and survey anonymously, which was done in an attempt to gain representative answers that truly reflected their perceptions. This was especially important, with my being an insider researcher white, able-bodied and senior leader, as discussed in Chapter Five, as staff may have responded more positively or negatively than if I was 'neutral' (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002; see Chapter Four). Consequently, I was unable to do pre and post RF implementation comparisons of individual staff members' confidence. If I had been able to do so I may have been able to demonstrate that confidence for individual staff members increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the course of the research, and to delineate why this may be. I would have predicted, perhaps erroneously, that members of the collaborative inquiry would have reported more confidence at implementing the Framework, purely from having the opportunity to learn from each other's practice, as research indicates (Banerjee et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2004). Despite this, the quantitative data triangulated the

qualitative findings that improved staff confidence appeared to directly impact upon the reported quantity and quality of resilience-based practice used by staff over time. It is possible that staff may not have interpreted the written questions on the audit and survey as I intended them.

Another potential limitation of this research is the small sample size, as presented in Chapter Six. Consequently, the results must be interpreted with caution. It is difficult to make generalisations that apply to larger populations from research based on small samples. Both Trotter (2012) and Dworkin (2012) state that quantitative approaches provide a specific size required to evidence findings, whereas qualitative research requires a certain approach; that of "saturation". In qualitative research, saturation means reaching "...a point at which all questions have been thoroughly explored in detail [until] no new concepts or themes emerge" (Trotter, 2012, p.399). In re-presenting the interpretations of the data made by myself and the second analyst during the thematic analysis to staff and pupils (see Chapter Six), this limitation was alleviated somewhat. I followed Aronson's (1994) recommendation to obtain feedback from contributors about the themes identified. These themes were then related to the resilience research evidence base in this chapter.

Marshall (1996) argues that quantitative researchers fail to understand the usefulness of studying small samples. He adds that an appropriate sample size is one that answers the research questions (Marshall, 1996). By using mixed methods in this research, the qualitative evidence was triangulated through use of quantitative measures, and the research questions answered. However, it is not unrealistic to expect to test what has been found to have statistically significant properties on larger populations in the future in an attempt to replicate the findings. Despite these limitations, statistically significant improvements in pupils' social and emotional progress were evidenced.

The imbalance of male pupils compared to female pupils is reflective of special schools for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties nationally. Research explains this whereby boys typically externalise behaviours (van Orden, 2011), and they are consequently referred to schools that specialise in supporting such difficulties, such as Eleanor Smith School. Whereas, girls tend to internalise mental health difficulties they may be experiencing (van Orden, 2011), and subsequently, are not seen as so challenging to teacher time or academic progress. While the ethnic makeup of the pupils involved in the research was diverse, as would be expected in the Borough they live within, I did not delineate the impact of ethnicity on the outcomes I measured. Neither did I ask pupils to identify their sexuality. I did not do this as I felt this may have been inappropriate to ask them given their age ranges of eight to ten. If I had completed my work with secondary pupils, as discussed in Chapter Ten, there may have been an opportunity to do so. Anything in this work was deliberately non-heterosexist, following school policies (see also the pictorial versions of the Resilience Framework in Appendices Eight and Nine, where pupils could choose either version to complete if they wanted to demonstrate their responses in that format). There are therefore future research opportunities in this field on the impact gender (Sun and Stewart, 2007), race (Finn & Rock, 1997) and sexuality (see Aranda, Coleman, Sherriff, Cocking, Zeeman & Cunningham, 2018; Zeeman, Aranda, Sherriff & Cocking, 2017) may have on supporting resilience in pupils with complex needs.

In an effort to keep this research contained within a manageable scope, I targeted primary aged pupils. Considerations that may be developmentally specific have arisen during the course of this work that relate to pupils in the secondary school phase. Banerjee et al. (2016) also endorse studying the generalisation of findings following primary pupils into their secondary educational careers. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Ten and an opportunity for future research is presented.

Methodological Limitations

When analysing the Collaborative Inquiry transcripts, I was conscious that contributions made by staff whose roles may traditionally be viewed as 'lower' in the school hierarchy, such as the midday supervisor, were lesser in volume when compared to other staff. This may have been due somewhat to the new concept of involving ALL staff collaboratively, as part of a whole school approach. It may have been that these staff were less confident about contributing, or they may have said all they wanted to. There is also the possibility that their interactions with them were for shorter periods of time during the day, at lunchtime only, for example. This may have limited their contributions, seeing them for briefer windows of time daily. It also may have been that my facilitation was poor. Again, I cannot know this with certainty, only offer it as a consideration. Of 84 whole school, resilience-building approaches reviewed in their report, Hart and Heaver (2013) found that only two were truly systemic. At the instigation of this research, involving all staff, regardless of their role, was breaking new ground in schools. The challenge now is for researchers and practitioners to consider how to initiate and embed such cultures in schools. The value of doing so has been clearly demonstrated by this work.

As referred to in Chapter Three, a methodological criticism of resilience research is its failure to include and access those with complex needs (Hart et al., 2016). I therefore deliberately chose an accessible, creative method that I hoped would allow the children in this research to be able to share their experiences with me, which was Body Mapping (see Chapters Five & Six). Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco and Davy (2012) endorsed this method for children, stating that it allows them to communicate their experiences with researchers effectively. Crivello, Camfield and Woodhead (2009) list the advantages of using body mapping as a method with children. However, they also warn of possible disadvantages, such as it necessitating active facilitation which may require some generalisation and the challenge to shift the focus of discussion from the negative to the positive.

Using this approach was also a risk, as Scherer (2014) found in her use of visual methods with primary school children who did not engage with drawing at all. While all pupils engaged in the activity during the Body Mapping sessions, it is open to question how they understood and interpreted what I was asking them. Some pupils may also not have engaged as much with an arts-based method if they did not feel confident or have a preference for such activities. I am unable to determine the extent any of these considerations may have had on the data, I can only present them as cautions to be mindful of. Despite this, themes emerged from the data, as generated by the pupils that were in general agreement about their experiences of the school and how it supported their resilience. These were also closely aligned with staff perceptions as reported in Chapter Eight (see Figure 8.1).

Potential Role Conflict

It must also be acknowledged that one of the supervisors of this work is also the co-founder of the Academic Resilience Approach (ARA), as referred to in Chapter One. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, as with our personal communications regarding the limitations of the Resilience Framework and opportunities for future research, likewise, Professor Hart equally reflected on challenges to the AR Approach. For example, when considering the scope of this thesis, I had to defend my position by involving primary children only to make it focused and manageable. Professor Hart had an interest in also investigating the impact on outcomes for secondary pupils. The second supervisor for my thesis was also present and actively challenging during supervision sessions, providing his own independent perspective to the work, having no 'vested' or personal interest in the approach himself. Through discussion and reflective supervisory sessions, a balance was to be achieved between all three of our views.

Inclusion vs Participation

There are limitations to the degree of participation pupils had in this research. As outlined in Chapter Five, this work was participatory so far as I included pupils, asking them to describe their lived experiences and meanings made of them to me. I still held a position of power to the staff and pupils as an insider researcher (Hart et al., 2016). However, I actively consulted them on issues directly relating to their experiences, in an attempt to ascertain what their views were on what may be working for or against developing resilience in pupils in the school. Staff had more input into the questions to be considered in the Collaborative Inquiry sessions. These were determined collaboratively in the second two meetings, after my outlining suggestions for session one (see Appendices Five & Six).

By including staff and pupils in this research, I hoped to strengthen their voices, especially those of the pupils and non-teaching staff. I argue that the inclusion of pupils through their feedback on staff use of the Framework has had, and will continue to have, an impact on their experiences at the school. The findings will also inform future schools-based research in this field. Scope remains for resilience research in schools to develop co-produced knowledge, using emancipatory approaches as discussed in Chapter Three (Walmsley, 2004). This would provide an opportunity for children to give direction to research questions concerning them, how these may be investigated, the resultant outcomes that could be of benefit to them (Nind, 2008) and could also have a transformative effect for them (Mertens, 2016).

Being an Inside Researcher

The final methodological limitation meriting consideration is my influence on the data as an insider researcher, which Hart et al (2016, p.8) describe as presenting "...complex power issues". As stated in Chapter One, I was a senior leader in the school, I had existing relationships with staff and they were aware of my interest in supporting resilience in pupils. It must therefore be acknowledged that staff may have been performing or answering in ways they thought would benefit or 'help' me. In Chapter Five I outlined the possible impact on the data my being a senior leader could have. In Chapters Four and Five I also outlined how an action research design embraced the strengths and limitations of being an insider. In reviewing the literature on insider research, there is a balance to be had. Meyer (2003) argues that being an insider researcher with practitioner credibility enables

one to capture the reality of the world being studied. Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002) state that an action research design complements this stance whereby the researcher is unavoidably a part of the social systems involved. One can never be truly impartial to this. As Madhill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) warn an individual analyst can create credibility problems for qualitative approaches. I consequently took the steps of involving a second analyst and re-presenting the interpretations we made of the data to collaborating staff and pupils in the body mapping sessions for final endorsement. Having a second analyst (who was also a senior leader) and triangulating qualitative data with quantitative evidence allays some of the concerns associated with insider research alluded to in Chapter Five.

Asserting the Findings with Confidence

There are multiple methodological issues discussed in the above sections that must be considered when asserting the accuracy of the findings I have presented. My own inherent experiences and biases shaped how I conceptualised the research questions (van Heugten, 2004), the methods I chose (van Heugten, 2004), along with how I interpreted the data (Clark, MacIntyre, and Cruikshank, 2007). As outlined in Chapters One, Two and Four, I have always worked with children and families from disadvantaged backgrounds. This contributed to my decision to include the children at Eleanor Smith School in the research. I have also been aware, both historically and currently, of children with Special Educational Needs being excluded from both policy and practice at many levels and the impact this can have upon them. Examples of this include international data collection (e.g. UNICEF, 2016), resilience research (Hart and Heaver, 2013) and being excluded from community clubs (see Chapter Three). Again, this knowledge informed my decision to select methods that would highlight their voice and assist me in sharing at least some their lived experiences with others.

In relation to defending the accuracy of the data presented in this thesis, it is important to note that my personal and professional relationships within the school may have undermined my neutrality. I also held a position of power for both staff and pupils, as a senior leader in the school and as the researcher leading the work. This knowledge influenced my decision to use a collaborative approach. Choosing to explore research in a setting where I was situated as an insider could contribute to bias and inaccurate data (Mercer, 2007). Fellow researchers advise building in checks such as being reflexive and considering multiple layers of explanation (Cheek, 1999). I attempted to counter the challenges of my own inherent biases, along with those of being an insider researcher, by using a reflective journal (Hewitt-Taylor, 2012) after each data collection activity, enlisting a co-analyst (Madhill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000) and checking the interpretations of the data to the participants themselves using an iterative process of drafting and re-drafting the data (Banks, Armstrong, Carter, Graham, Hayward and Henry, 2012).

While I took every effort to counter inaccuracies in the data, I am still unable to state with certainty that pupils and staff were not answering me in a way they thought may be favourable, or even to sabotage the findings. To counter this, I decided upon the use of mixed methods to triangulate the data, as expressed in Chapter Five. The qualitative data supported the quantitative data to a degree (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Figure 8.1 also highlights that staff and pupils independently identified overlapping themes of the facilitators of embedding resilience-based practice. I believe that using mixed methods and

collaborative approaches has lent some certainty to the accuracy of the data. I have attempted to present the challenges to the rigour of the data transparently, along with the steps I took to counter them. I hope I have provided sufficient context and detail to assist readers of this thesis to come to their own conclusions regarding the rigour of the data and analysis presented.

"The Eleanor Smith Way"

Masten (2014) views the mechanisms of resilience as being interactive, ordinary and steeped in relationships and these findings reinforce her view. Her writing encapsulates the ethos of this research, recognising the importance of relationships and the impact any adult in a school community can have on any child. All staff are empowered, regardless of role, to facilitate resilience in pupils; whether this be through pupil engagement, identifying strengths, working alongside parents or volunteering to run an after-school club. They are all helping to "…put a man on the moon" (Ofsted, 2010, p.8; see Chapter Five). The head of school jokingly describes this as "The Eleanor Smith Way". Although said in jest, I can think of no better alternative to capture the spirit.

It may be easier at this point to visualise how a resilience promoting school appears, based on the findings of this research, via a written virtual tour. Put yourself, the reader, in Simone or Alistair's shoes, introduced in Chapter One, and walk with them through the school's entrance. The mechanisms interacting to support your resilience would be evidenced by staff practice, experienced but not necessarily 'seen' (see Chapter Four). The first staff members you come into contact with are the administrative team in the front office. They greet you by name, speak to your parent and welcome them to the school with a smile. You go inside the school and wait for breakfast club to start, playing some board games, reading a book, or talking to other pupils or adults while you wait. The atmosphere is calm and anticipatory. You are the breakfast club monitor and you take orders, make toast and serve it to your peers. You then sit at a table set in a family style arrangement and eat a healthy breakfast, chatting to others as you do. Or you go outside and spend some time in the playground interacting with staff and pupils, as you have had a long journey to school and you may need to release some energy before you begin lessons.

Your teaching team welcome you into your first lesson. You know exactly what to expect as you have a visual timetable on the wall, and mutually agreed class rules are clear and displayed. You spend the day focusing on targeted learning tasks that are differentiated to your needs, with specialist input where needed. You also have therapeutic activities interspersed throughout your day to ensure your brain is "ready to learn" (Thrive, 2015). This includes sessions like massage after lunchtime, to help calm and regulate you. Assembly celebrates school members' achievements and inspires you with upcoming events. You sing "Happy Birthday" to people whose birthdays have occurred recently or those coming up soon. You're looking forward to your after-school club, street dance. You're trying really hard all day to earn bonus points so you can attend the paintballing trip at the end of term. You also know that if and when you make mistakes you will be supported to learn from them. The next day will be started afresh, after reflecting on the difficulty with an adult or peer, having made reparation for this. You leave school feeling valued and part of your community.

Summary

In summary, the key finding of this research was that positive outcomes may be achieved for pupils with complex needs using resilience-based practice. Staff now acknowledge pupils' contexts and strategies that support their individual ecologies view these as an 'intervention' rather than as a 'privilege' to be earned or removed (see Chapter One). Strengths based practice is built upon by identifying and supporting pupils' talents and interests. There is also the unquestioning recognition that any member of staff can have an impact upon pupils, and that the relationship an adult has with a child is a key influencing mechanism that supports their resilience. In Chapter Eight, the pupils who participated reported a very strong sense of belonging, along with a perception of the school feeling like a family. The mechanisms identified in both the staff and pupil data generated the phenomena (outcomes) that have been discussed.

Simone and Alistair's virtual day is obviously one based on an ideal type as evidenced by the research data. The difficulties, or challenges, identified by some staff that precluded them from implementing resilience-based practice to their full satisfaction were a lack of time and uncertainty about how to implement the Framework (see Chapter Eight). Both these barriers and the research that explains them have been discussed in this Chapter and practice suggestions for schools that could alleviate these are discussed further in Chapter Ten. Practice at Eleanor Smith School has contributed to the development of a now nationally used approach, called Academic Resilience (BoingBoing, 2014). The Academic Resilience Approach has been disseminated locally and nationally subsequent to this research's completion via Big Lottery funded HeadStart projects (see Big Lottery, 2013; Hart & Aumann, 2017). I present this in more detail in the subsequent chapter also. So far, I have outlined practice at the micro, meso and exosystemic levels of pupils' ecologies (see Figure 3.1; Chapter Three) at Eleanor Smith School. Chapter Ten looks more broadly at how local practice may be used to inform change at the macrosystemic or policy level of their contexts.

Chapter Ten: Implications: Practice Changes Informing Educational Policy

Introduction

The research findings herein have demonstrated that resilience-based practice can realise positive outcomes for pupils with complex needs, albeit not to nationally expected educational standards. This Chapter outlines recommendations that may support other schools, both special and mainstream, to achieve similar or better results for their pupils. Practice implications from this research include schools allocating time for staff to share and reflect on practice, along with having on-going training and opportunities to disseminate learning to others. From this research's evidence, it also appears schools could consider the degree to which leaders support new programmes, along with the climate of staff relationships and energy levels in their settings before implementing initiatives. Other practice issues from this work that may provide useful guidance to schools are discussed in more detail throughout this Chapter.

Learning from this thesis that can translate into other schools' systems is presented, for example, when writing Education Health and Care Plans ((EHC) Plans; Department for Education (DfE), 2014). Following this, I consider how the pupil premium fund that is allocated by the Government in the United Kingdom (UK) to address pupil's additional needs could be distributed by schools based on the findings at Eleanor Smith School. Educational policy implications are also considered in this Chapter. A challenge is offered for the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to change its current framework when assessing the progress made by children with complex needs. My work demonstrates how important an ecological model can be to children with complex needs when considering their lived experiences and achievements. Ofsted could directly access the views of these children to gain an insight into what success or progress may look like for them and use this knowledge to apply a 'non-mainstream' framework onto already marginalised children. Finally, research recommendations from these findings are presented. The following section begins with recommendations for schools wishing to implement a whole school resilience-based approach in their settings, based upon the evidence from my work. The format is the same as presented in Chapters Eight and Nine, whereby when strategies from the Resilience Framework ((RF), Hart, Blincow & Thomas, 2007; see Appendix One) are applied they are referenced directly with page numbers.

Implications for Practice in Schools: Removing Barriers and Generalising Findings

Addressing Practice Barriers

As discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine, staff identified two barriers that challenged more successful implementation of the Resilience Framework at Eleanor Smith School. These were uncertainty as to how to use the Framework and a lack of prioritised time in the school day to do so. When considering the literature relating to both areas of concern this is not surprising. Regardless of school setting, both my own and other's research indicates that staff perceptions of workload pressures and lack of confidence when implementing new programmes are common in education (Clarke, O'Sullivan and Barry, 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Higton Leonardi, Richards, Choudhury, Sofroniou & Owen, 2017; see Chapter

Nine). Clarke et al. (2010) found that teachers identified finding time during the day to implement new programmes difficult. Regarding the issue of low confidence, they argue that on-going training and support are needed to increase the likelihood of successful programme implementation in schools (Clarke et al., 2010).

Based on this thesis, a suggestion to address the barrier of workload pressure is that schools allocate time for on-going collective meetings. All staff could be invited to join meetings that specifically share strategies that work successfully, promote idea generation and monitor the impact of implementation (see Chapter Eight). Meetings could also be timed to suit administrative and ancillary staff, so they are able to participate. Separate meetings may be necessary that fit with some staff group's hours of work, valuing a truly whole school approach.

This research found the structure of Collaborative Inquiry meetings provided space for staff to share practice as outlined in Chapters Six and Eight. Staff actively referred to using the RF in their practice on a daily basis in briefing and de-briefing meetings. This resulted in their feeding back in collaborative inquiry meetings that they noted their using a shared resilience-based language. MacCobb, Fitzgerald and Lanigan-O'Keefe (2014) reinforce that having a common language is essential for programme integration and successful strategic work to take place in staff groups. Meetings such as this in schools could encourage and maximise opportunities to develop and share the language of resilience-based practice collectively.

In their research on successful programme implementation in schools, Kershner and McQuillan (2016) maintain that scheduled, open learning allows staff to experience their colleagues' competence, sincerity and reliability. This therefore increases relational trust and increases the likelihood of risk taking and innovation. They found that mutual learning is more powerful, as staff groups have the potential to develop skills together (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). This allowed staff to "…identify shared concerns, openly communicate those ideas, and develop plans to address them" (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p.24). Kershner and McQuillan (2016) state that through shared learning time, not only could the event under examination be considered, but the contextual and relational elements of the work could also be investigated.

Nadeem, Kataoka, Change, Vona, Wong and Stein (2011) report that school leaders prioritising and allocating time to reflect on practice is a critical component of effective programme use by staff. In her work on advancing social change via transformative research, Mertens (2016) maintains that collective and transparent transformation is possible through collaboration. Yeung's (2012) research into using a collaborative approach to implement inclusion in mainstream schools was helpful. She found that having the opportunity to collaborate was found to be effective at reducing barriers to programme implementation (Yeung, 2012). Schools can promote reflective practice that supports resilience in pupils through a collaborative approach to learning.

The second barrier identified by some staff in this research regarded feelings of uncertainty about implementing the RF in their practice. As with addressing workload pressures, schools can improve feelings of staff confidence when embedding new programmes by allocating time for staff to discuss shared practice, encouraging use of a collective language and being involved in continued training (see Chapter Seven). Crosby, Day, Baroni and Somers (2015)

state that when staff confidence is low, clear communication and the opportunity to reflect on learning in practice are essential to successful programme integration in schools. From the data in Chapter Eight, it appears that regular training on the rationale for using the Framework, along with strategic forecasting of the benefits, and staff disseminating their learning to others can all have a positive impact on staff confidence levels when implementing new initiatives in schools.

Since the inception of this work, staff in various roles have participated in disseminating the findings and practice at Eleanor Smith in many ways. Examples of this are; training and supporting a local secondary school in the borough to implement the Academic Resilience Approach in 2014, presenting at the Pathways to Resilience Conference III: Beyond Nature vs. Nurture in 2015 (Coombe, 2015) and at the Pathways to Resilience Conference IV: Global South Perspectives in 2017 (Rogers, 2017), sharing practice with the Resilience Forum of colleagues in Brighton in 2016, and introducing Newham's HeadStart projects (see Chapter Nine) to colleagues in Blackpool in 2017. It appears that having the opportunity to share practice with others may have increased staff confidence over time, as their survey feedback in Chapter Seven indicates.

In this section I have covered research knowledge about how to address some barriers to programme implementation in schools. I now consider which mechanisms may have facilitated embedding the whole school approach at Eleanor Smith School. These include organisational readiness for change, leadership support, having a shared language and collaborative learning. Some of these mechanisms are common also to addressing practice barriers, as already discussed and have implications for the implementation of new initiatives in schools.

A Truly WHOLE School Approach: The Academic Resilience Approach Ignited

As referred to in Chapter Three, a criticism of resilience research with children was the paucity of whole school approaches being used. Hart and Heaver (2013) alert researchers to the fact that only two out of 84 "whole school" interventions they reviewed were actually inclusive of all staff and being implemented at a systems level. This thesis made an original contribution to this field of knowledge by including all staff and accessing the voices of children with complex needs using a method accessible to them. Government policy is increasingly recognising the importance of involving *all* staff and pupils in whole school approaches to well-being so that pupils' needs are being met holistically (e.g. Department of Health (DoH), 2015; Mental Health Task Force (MHTF), 2016; Public Health England (PHE), 2015). My research has also contributed to an approach signposted in the first chapter, now known as the Academic Resilience Approach ((ARA) see BoingBoing, 2014). This is a systemic model that includes all children and staff in educational settings. Further details of which are outlined toward the end of this section.

My work indicates it is possible to transfer recommendations from the findings in the special school in this work into mainstream schools. I suggest this because special schools are required to meet the same standards as mainstream schools in relation to progress and well-being. Ofsted (2018, p.4) write "The [inspection] handbook applies to all schools in England [including special schools]…under section 5 of the Education Act 2005". These standards include academic attainment, behavioural expectations and the social

development of pupils (Ofsted, 2018). The assertion could be made that it is more difficult to achieve positive outcomes with children with multiple needs, given their complexity. Despite the range of pupils' needs at Eleanor Smith School, the data from staff and pupils demonstrates that positive outcomes were achieved for, and with them. Ofsted acknowledged this in the school's most recent inspection report where it states "The school relentlessly strives to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills through well-planned, all-year-round activities and a focus on developing pupils' resilience" (Ofsted, 2015, p.4). I now outline the mechanisms identified in the findings that may have contributed to this judgement, along with recommendations that may guide other schools.

Leadership support appeared to be an essential mechanism to the whole school approach being successfully adopted in this work. Without the support of the senior leadership team at the school, the outcomes for pupils may not have been as positive. Yeung (2012) advises school leaders to mobilise a widely shared culture that creates a caring environment for pupils. Kershner and McQuillan (2016) found that staff having trust in their leadership team was an essential aspect of the adoption of new initiatives. It also appears crucial that staff take responsibility as a group for new programmes (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). Clarke et al. (2010) support this, finding that reciprocal, positive staff relationships translate into successful implementation of school programmes. Nadeem et al. (2011) state that strong leaders who communicate clearly are essential for school-based approaches that support well-being and the likelihood of them being adopted and sustained by staff.

As referred to in Chapter Eight, this appeared to happen at Eleanor Smith School when use of the Framework was prioritised daily, through use of shared language, reflecting collectively and celebrating the success of practice. The implication for schools who are considering adopting a whole school, resilience-building approach, is that it has the support of senior leaders and staff (DoH & DfE, 2017). Collective energy and clear communication also appear to be vital ingredients for successful implementation of school programmes.

This also has implications for a school being 'ready' to implement new programmes or initiatives. The concept of 'organisational readiness' may be a contributory factor to programme adoption in schools. In his work on organisational readiness Weiner (2009, p. 1) defines the concept as "…members' shared resolve to implement a change (change commitment) and shared belief in their collective capability to do so (change efficacy)". He goes on to state that staff must value the change and favourably appraise the associated demands of the task, resource availability and situational factors (Weiner, 2009). When organisational readiness is high staff are more likely to initiate the change, put more effort into doing so, persist when it is difficult and cooperate; the result being effective programme implementation (Weiner, 2009). This was evident in the Collaborative Inquiry transcripts in this data, where staff expressed a willingness to engage in implementing the Framework (see Chapter Eight).

Clarke et al. (2010) write that a school context's resources and capacity are contributory factors that influence organisational readiness to implement new initiatives. The 'resource' of the staff and its capacity to adopt the Resilience Framework in their practice is evident in the qualitative feedback on the audit and survey referred to in Chapter Eight. Staff wrote comments such as "Great! Let's do this!" Clarke et al. (2010) found that when mental

health promoting programmes are viewed positively and as part of the school's 'job' by staff, they are more likely to be successfully implemented (Clarke et al., 2010). It appears, through staff confidence improving and their reported practice changes (see Chapters Seven and Eight), that the school was ready to implementation the Framework. Leaders in other schools could assess their setting's readiness for change before implementing new initiatives to increase the likelihood of programme adoption.

Using an action research cycle may be useful for schools to maintain the momentum of whole school approaches. As the findings from the action research indicate, having the opportunity to plan, implement and evaluate (see Figure 6.1 & Chapter Six) had a direct impact on practice. A five-year Resilience Development Action Plan (RDAP, see Appendix Thirteen) for the school was agreed, as a direct outcome of the Collaborative Inquiry group's input, discussed in Chapter Eight. Targets on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Resilience Development Action Plan (which is more detailed and cross-referenced with the School Improvement Plan) were contributed to by the group, driving the momentum for change in daily practice. Both these plans addressed the barriers staff identified, as presented in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. Momentum for implementation of the Framework was maintained by planning for the future and projecting tasks, timeframes and responsibilities. Regular collective planning and target evaluation with agreed timeframes appear to maintain the impetus behind successful embedding of new programmes in schools. Other schools could mirror these actions to drive and sustain whole school approaches to resilience building.

As highlighted in Chapter Nine, the action research cycle was used to review the School Improvement Plan and RDAP. This method of active, cyclical planning and reviewing of impact allowed staff to continually monitor and reflect on performance in a shared manner, as research recommends (Nadeem et al., 2011; Yeung, 2012). Crosby et al. (2015) term such involvement in practice as "meaningful participation". Research informs us that this is one of the strengths of an action research cycle in organisations, as discussed in Chapter Four (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2000). Cheek (1999) asserts that using an action research approach to change implementation allows practitioners to influence and alter practice as necessary. Continued collaborative inquiry meetings using the action research cycle appeared influential in maintaining the momentum of cyclical reflecting and reviewing. Action research is commonly conducted in schools (Mertler, 2016) and educational settings may find use of this cycle helpful as a reflective tool, as my work did.

At the outset of this research, Professor Angie Hart and Lisa Williams, were beginning to write resources for a whole school approach, known as Academic Resilience. This approach involves auditing resilience-based practice in schools and setting priorities that involve all school staff (BoingBoing, 2014), work that this research helped to inform. Hart and Williams formulated the approach targeted at addressing the imbalance some disadvantaged pupils in schools may experience, at a systems level; changing the odds for them, whilst simultaneously beating those odds (see Chapter Two). Given this is a whole school systems approach, it is important for senior leaders to consult with all staff, lending consideration to their views and prioritising collectively, according to the needs of their individual schools. There are free web resources available (see BoingBoing, 2014) for schools to apply this

systematic approach in their own settings. As stated in Chapter Three, these resources have been built upon collectively by colleagues locally, nationally and internationally.

Public sector budgets have been cut significantly over the past few years in the UK (Reeves, Basu, McKee, Marmot & Stuckler, 2013). In 2016 the National Audit Office warned that school budgets faced three billion pounds worth of cuts by 2020 (Pells, 2016). These predicted cuts were realised in 2017 when the Government's new formula for calculating funding allocations to schools meant a real term cut of 4.6% between 2015 and 2019 (Whittaker, 2017). At the coal face, this has meant that schools have taken measures such as reducing staff and going into deficit budgets (Okolosie, 2018). In London, Hackney's Deputy Mayor reported "…[this] erosion of funding for this most vital of services threatens to have a huge impact on the children, parents and carers who need it most" and that "…inadequate funding will affect young people for the rest of their lives" (Bramble, 2017). Further implications of such fiscal cuts are discussed in the following section. Having access to a systematic and free resilience building approach is therefore especially helpful to schools in the current economic climate and of potential benefit to pupils.

As stated, whole school resilience-building approaches are now being used across the UK. During the course of this thesis, Big Lottery, the national charity that funds community projects, began a pilot in 2013 that "…[gave] a number of areas across England over £5m to pilot ways of helping young people deal with life's ups and downs" (see Big Lottery, 2013). The funded projects are referred to nationally as "HeadStart" (see Chapter Nine). Newham successfully applied for this funding and began its pilot programme in 2014. Staff from the national young people's charity, Young Minds, Eleanor Smith School and I worked collegially with local schools to implement the Academic Resilience Approach as part of HeadStart. Employees at the school have also maintained a relationship with the University of Brighton's Resilience Forum, the social enterprise BoingBoing (see www.boingboing.org.uk; see Chapter One), and HeadStart colleagues based in Blackpool (DfE, 2017b) to continue the work of using whole school approaches nationally.

Since the inception of my work in 2012, it is apparent that whole school approaches can be used successfully in a range of school settings. Both special and mainstream schools alike are using the ARA, although still on a small scale in the UK. Schools interested in implementing the ARA may wish to collaborate and with other sectors so that they may learn from each other's experiences and build upon successes. Collective learning between schools could encourage a climate of best practice being shared nationally. How practice from these findings and HeadStart involvement can inform policy is considered in a subsequent section. At this point the way practice and policy may influence each other is considered, looking at how EHC Plans may be supported through use of the Framework as an evidence-based resource.

Education, Health and Care Plans and Partnership Work *Work*ing

Educational policy determined that EHC Plans replaced Statements of Special Educational Needs in England in 2014 (DfE, 2014; Long, 2017; see Chapter Two). Their purpose is to assess and make provision for children and young people's educational, health and social care needs, in a *unified* way (Long, 2017). There are reported difficulties with the implementation of EHC plans. In his review of the reformed system, Long (2017) writes that

one third of parents believed the process of getting an EHC plan issued for their child was unsatisfactory and that the outcomes would not be achieved. Coupled with this, a quarter of them found initiating the process difficult (Long, 2017). A contributory factor to this dissatisfaction may be that the partnership work required to ensure successful implementation of EHC plans is not entirely functional.

Fiscal difficulties also impact at the macrosystemic level of public sector services in terms of the amount of resources reduction over the past nine years in the UK (Reeves et al., 2013). An example of this is an overall reduction of 2.2% in public sector spending between 2009 and 2011 (Reeves et al., 2013). In a recent blog for the National Federation for Education Research (NFER), Williams (2018) reported that the NFER has found that government reductions in school budgets has meant that in some cases, the monies allocated for disadvantaged children (pupil premium, see subsequent section detailing equity) is being channelled into schools' budgets to cover general costs. The NFER warns that this currently has a negative impact on resourcing and staff recruitment, outcomes for children and questions the impact this may have on the social mobility of disadvantaged pupils in the future (Williams, 2018). Reeves et al. (2013) argue that such decreases in budgets have had adverse social effects, such as increases in depression, suicide rates and homelessness. Coupled with this, Bottrell (2013) and Garrett (2016) both warn that the individual is being "responsibilised"' to take control of their own destiny, with state responsibility being significantly reduced as a result (see Chapter Three).

Such policy decisions have had a domino effect on service reduction at the child's, familial and school levels of individuals' lived experiences. These reductions may make the reported implementation of EHC plans problematic, making the inter-agency partnership work EHC Plans rely upon more challenging. Majumdar (2006) warns of this where she contends that one of the largest barriers to successful partnership working is competition between agencies or staff. Brown, Crawford and Darongkamas (2000) argue that multidisciplinary work can actually exacerbate boundaries between workers. Both Majumdar (2006) and Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra and Madge (2004) assert that partnership work should only be entered into if it produces better organisation performance, and at lower costs, otherwise it can be counter-productive. Taylor-Gooby and Stoker (2011), and Reeves et al. (2013) warn of these conditions having less likelihood of existing under the current economic constraints in the UK.

Conversely, research into the elements of successful partnership work tells us that effective collaboration exists between agencies when; a feeling of interdependence exists, the advantages of working together are apparent, respect exists between workers, informal relationships are developed, communication is clear, a shared vision is held, goals are attainable, there is room for flexibility and adaptability, and favourable political and social climates are embedded (Majumdar, 2006). This has been achieved between Eleanor Smith School and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to some extent, with the sharing of a Clinical Psychologist who is based at the school but employed by CAMHS (referred to in Chapter Nine). Feedback of the impact of her work from pupils and families has been positive. I believe her shared vision with the school, her flexible and adaptable style of working and the relationships she has forged have all contributed to this successful partnership work.

The difficulties of inter-agency work were highlighted in my research where staff identified in Chapter Eight that it was difficult at times to engage other partners, especially when budgets and role boundaries were rigid. According to the data, EHC Plans appeared to work successfully when staff used their resilience-based practice and knowledge to inform them. At Eleanor Smith School the Resilience Framework is applied by staff when making recommendations that contribute to EHC plans. My findings indicate that referring to the Framework while formulating EHC plans is found useful by staff. I contend that doing so may also alleviate some of the difficulties of partnership work, enlisting others (Hart et al., p.36) and securing their commitment (Hart et al., p.32) to these plans.

In practice, staff contribute to the formulation of EHC plans with pupils and families by using a strengths-based focus (Lerner, 2004) and identifying talents (Hart et al., 2007 p.117) and interests (p.118) pupils have that can be built upon in the plan. Staff at Eleanor Smith School attend EHC meetings with extensive knowledge of pupils that build upon these pre-existing assets. These strengths are shared with EHC Plan contributors and are written into the actions agreed to achieve outcomes for pupils. This allows staff to work with families and to plan for qualifications and vocational outcomes early in a pupil's school career. Other schools may find using a strengths-based approach helpful when contributing to EHC plans also.

Protective factors, and the strategies that can be used to promote them and support children with complex needs are clearly documented by resilience research (see Chapter Three). Mapping out a life plan (Hart et al., 2007, p.93), having at least one secure attachment (Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Hart et al., 2007, p.70), developing talents outside of school (Bryan, 2005; Hart et al., 2007, p.138) and problem solving (Hart et al., 2007 p.112; Ungar, 2005) may all combine to strengthen a child's pre-existing assets. A fourth wave resilience-building approach endorses the interplay of these factors and how strategies that build upon them can support resilience in children with complex needs. These strategies can be written into EHC Plans and agreed between all parties to be acted upon.

The Noble Truths Guiding Planning for Children

I propose that contributors to EHC plans (parents, education/health/social care professionals, voluntary agencies, local authority representatives and the young people themselves) can use the Resilience Framework as a supportive tool when agreeing actions for children with complex needs. I contend use of an evidence-based approach, like the Framework, could be used to help "…people with the things they are actually struggling with" (Walker, Hart and Hanna, 2017, p.107) as the Department of Health (2015) demands. This Department (DoH, 2015, p.41) states "…children and young people have to fit the services, rather than the services fitting the changing needs of the child or young person". An example of how this can be achieved by schools was outlined earlier in Chapter Nine, the work of the Clinical Psychologist at Eleanor Smith going to families, not expecting families to present themselves in an office for appointments with her.

It may also be useful for those who commission local services to be active participants at EHC planning meetings. The Department of Health (2015, p.70) recommends that what is included in Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing should be informed by "…collaboration with children, young people, families

as well as provider and commissioner representatives". The literature base clearly tells us that successful enlisting at various levels in children's ecologies is essential for programme adoption (Clarke, et al., 2010). I would suggest that commissioners should also be involved in some EHC planning meetings where they can hear and understand the potential impact of resilience-based practice on children and young people. By doing so, they would be situated to ensure relevant resilience-building services are available and accessible to children with complex needs in their local areas.

Further to this, Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007), of which the Framework is a part, and EHC plans hold many commonalities; they are child centred, strengths based, ecological and long term. Both value the importance of enlisting others, identifying and keeping relationships going and are future-oriented. By using the 'Noble Truths' of Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007; see Appendix One & Chapter Three) of *accepting* the starting points of where a child and their family currently are, *conserving* the support and strategies that they find are working for them, *committing* on a long term basis to the family and *enlisting* the skills and expertise of the agencies involved around the family, some of the barriers to partnership work discussed in Chapter Two may be overcome. Regardless of the difficulties raised by policies not being as effective as intended at times, Hart et al.'s (2007, p.4, emphasis in the original) mantra "…there is *always something* that can be done to make things better for disadvantaged children" equally applies to drawing up EHC plans.

However, Majumdar (2006) warns that cross-agency work that acknowledges acceptance, conservation, commitment and enlisting as principles will only occur if a collective willingness between participants exists. This was not evident in the partnership work between Eleanor Smith School and the local CAMHS discussed in Chapter Nine, with a refusal to start a school-based clinic for pupils' medication reviews. Conversely, it has, however, been achieved in the work of the school-based CAMHS' Clinical Psychologist who challenges such traditional inter-agency roles and boundaries, making home visits and working after hours part of her practice.

As referred to in Chapter Two, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ((NSPCC), 2017) clearly stated that mental health support for children should not be based on a medical model. In Chapter Three, I outlined that the NSPCC's (2017) report highlighted one in five referrals to CAMHS for children needing mental health support are rejected. The Department of Health's (2015) *Future in Mind* report outlined that agencies should develop local transformation plans (LTPs) which "…demonstrates how they would work together to improve the emotional health and well-being of children and young people in their area and support those with mental health problems across the whole care pathway" (National Health Service (NHS), 2016, p.5). The NSPCC's (2017) review of transformation plans also stipulated that practitioners need to work *with* children and families (see Chapter Nine).

There have been difficulties with some LTPs. For example, only 30% of LTPs having evidence of being co-produced with children and their families, and only half being referenced using evidence-based approaches to improve resilience (NHS, 2016), along with some areas not recognising the potential impact of abuse on children and failing to plan to support this (NSPCC, 2017). However, other areas have shone as examples of best practice, where they use data and direct input from children and young people to plan for service provision (NSPCC, 2017).

This learning could translate into practice when formulating EHC plans. The best practice examples from the NSPCC's (2017) review of LTPs demonstrate that if agencies hold a "common vision", as also called for by Wildridge et al. (2004), they may eradicate the difficulties of inter-agency work. According to research, these dilemmas will only be solved in the future if agencies at various sector levels and individuals at the centre of support plans share open communication, have clear roles, agree objectives and have a sense of trust and mutual respect (Robinson & Cottrell, 2005), as the Noble Truths (Hart et al., 2007) postulate. Other schools learning from this work could be aware of the need for mutual respect and trust with partners and actively work to promote these. I now present a further consideration for school policy and practice, which attempts to address pupils' contexts, 'levelling the playing field' for those with complex needs.

Levelling the Playing Field

Governments in the UK need to address the context of inequalities that children with complex needs experience to optimise outcomes for them. This would make the 'playing field' more accessible for these children, if still not equal. Espinoza (2007) states that one should consider equity and equality as the main basis of distributive justice. Distributive justice is concerned with how conditions and resources that affect individuals' well-being are allocated (Espinoza, 2007). He writes "The 'equity' concept is associated with fairness or justice in the provision of education…it takes individual circumstances into consideration, while 'equality'…connotes sameness in treatment" (Espinoza, 2007, p.345). In their work on equality in education, Lynch and Baker (2005) state that this can only be achieved if the interplaying relationships between economic, political, educational, socio-cultural and affective systems are all recognised in the first instance. These inequalities can exist in many realms, such as age, sexuality, religious belief, or disability (Lynch & Baker, 2005). Recognising that some may need more resources or input than others to be 'equal' from the outset is needed. This argument is demonstrated pictorially in Figure 10.1 below.
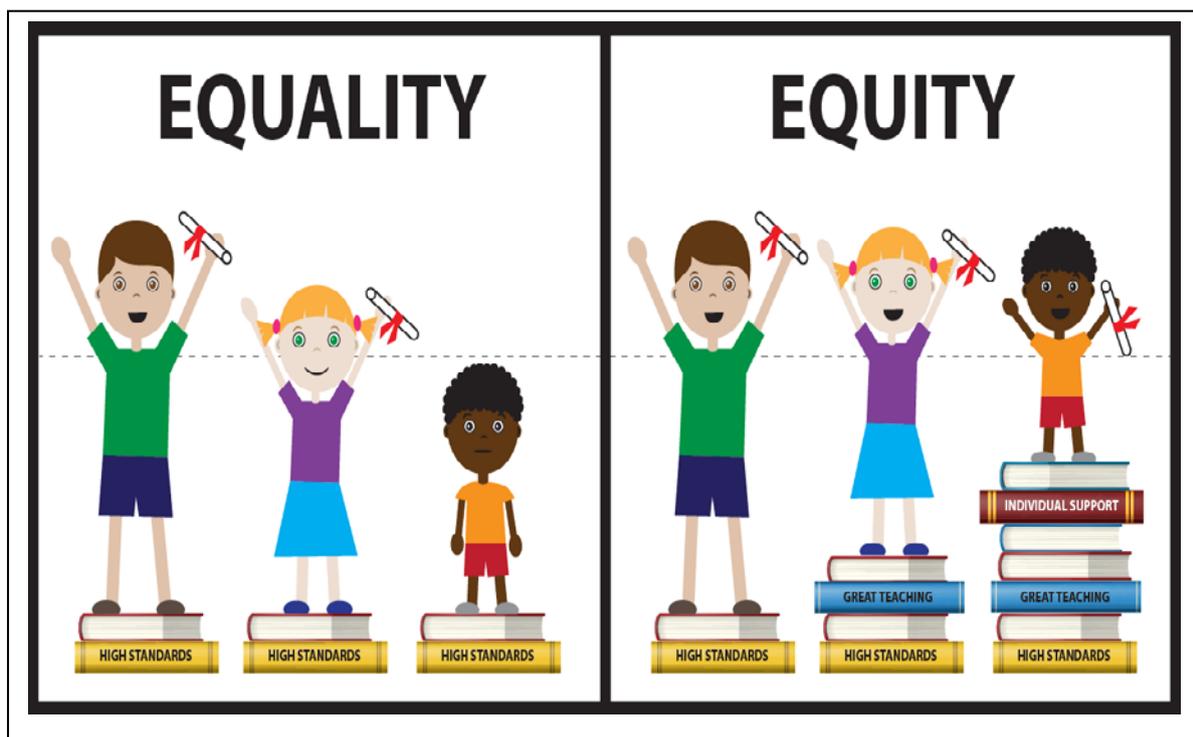
Figure 10.1: Equality Versus Equity
(http://www.gastandardsequity.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/equality-vs-equity-web1.png)

In the UK, the government attempts to redress the inequalities some children experience in schools. This is done through provision of the pupil premium fund to schools (see Open Government Licence, 2018). The pupil premium fund is additional money allocated by the Department for Education to schools for pupils whose household income is low (see Definitions & Terms). This is determined by annual school censuses that indicate which children are entitled to free school meals (see Chapter Two). In the academic year 2016/17, this money equated to £1,320 per primary aged pupil (see Open Government Licence, 2018) to be spent on additional support that may be required to address the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Some schools allocate this money to in-class support by employing teaching assistants to optimise pupil learning.

In 2012, the Sutton Trust funded an evaluation of the cost effectiveness and impact of school interventions on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils (Higgins, Kokotsaki & Coe, 2012). The types of interventions evaluated included schools 'ability grouping' children, sports participation and teacher feedback on learning. The review also included analysis of the impact of additional adults employed to support attainment. The finding was that teaching assistants have very low or no impact on pupil learning, and at a high cost. In fact, Higgins et al. (2012, p.27) report "The most recent study in the UK suggests low attaining pupils do less well with a TA [teaching assistant] supporting them". It should be noted that the Trust caution this finding is based on moderate evidence only, due to a lack of meta-analyses that specifically investigate this. Higgins et al. (2012) suggest the impact may not have been measured or identified in detail and it may have been overlooked in the outcomes found. My research indicates that it is not necessarily the role of the adult that has an impact on pupil outcomes, but rather, the relationship they have with them that

does (see Chapter Eight). The recommendation for other educational settings is to support caring, bi-directional adult-child relationships in their schools, regardless of role in the school.

From this work's findings, my assertion is that teaching assistants, or any additional adults in a school, could be deployed to have a positive impact on pupils through relationship building and engaging pupils in areas of strength. Resilience research tells us there are many ways adults can build positive relationships that support children (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgitt and Target, 1994; Daniel & Wassell, 2002; Hart & Heaver, 2013). Schools could extend the site supervisor's hours so that he or she works during school hours, perhaps providing a 'fix it' club for pupils at lunchtime. The cook could be positioned to offer out of hours cookery lessons for pupils with their parents and carers invited to participate. In my research, one pupil reported adults helping them "…be whatever they want to be" (see Chapter Eight). In lieu of in-class support for learning, schools could charge a teaching assistant with developing aspirations in pupils, and mapping out life plans (Hart et al., 2007 p.93) with them, having a view to post-school vocations (Agasisti, Avvisati, Borgonovi & Longobardi, 2018; see Figure 8.1). This practice would also inform long term targets for pupils in EHC plans.

A winner of the Pupil Premium Awards 2016/17 (Times Educational Supplement, 2017) reported their use of the additional funding to support their disadvantaged pupils. Northern Saints School in the North East of England identify half of their pupils being eligible for the pupil premium grant. The school used the fund to provide curriculum projects that developed the personal development of pupils, such as engaging the Outward Bound Trust, a national charity that provides children with personal challenges and exposure to the outdoors. Senior leaders at Northern Saints School also reported using the money to target specialist staff to support the well-being of pupils, specifically not employing teaching assistants in class. Northern Saints demonstrated an improvement in the well-being and resilience of pupils as a result of these interventions. Likewise, at Eleanor Smith School, some pupil premium funding is used to engage the services of an outdoor education facility and specialist staff (DoH, 2015) to support the resilience of pupils holistically. This is part of the 'package' of ecological support that appears to have positive outcomes for pupils.

In Chapter Eight, Elizabeth reported the after-school club offer helped them to "…get back on our feet". Schools could also use their pupil premium fund to support after school clubs (which can be run inexpensively) that develop talents (Hart et al., 2007 p.117) and interests (p.118). It should be noted that this contrasts with Higgins et al.'s (2012) findings, whereby after school programmes were found to have low impact for high cost. Perhaps for children living in a context of deprivation with complex needs, there is more value to be had from after school activities, as pupils in this research reported in Chapter Eight. Anecdotally, Bob, who reported the school feeling like a "big family" in Chapter Eight (at the time in Year Five) is now in Year Ten. A month ago, he voluntarily and without adult prompting, came to me and asked if I could help him start a "Biker Boys" club for primary aged pupils that he could mentor because he is good at fixing bikes. This provides further, although only subjective, evidence of the long-term and sustained impact implementation of the Resilience Framework has had on pupils at Eleanor Smith School.

It should be noted that Higgins et al.'s (2012) review focused solely on the impact of differing approaches to support the attainment of disadvantaged children. It is unclear whether children with complex needs were included in this; pupils may be disadvantaged, but not live with the additional needs that the pupils in this research do as described in Chapter Two. In Chapter Eight, the pupils in this research appeared to be discussing the perceived impact that the holistic package of support guided by the Resilience Framework, such as positive relationships and the after-school club provision had on them. There are many ways schools can allocate their funding to have a positive impact on pupils (see Table 10.1), not just as in-class support with learning. I recommend schools consider how they allocate additional monies for disadvantaged pupils in creative ways that support their strengths holistically. Some such examples have been shared in this section.

I now present a policy level challenge that has emerged from this research, suggesting that future Ofsted frameworks could be based on an ecological model of how schools support pupils holistically (PHE, 2015), taking an individualised, incremental view of their progress and achievements. Such frameworks would also be informed by children with complex needs and their families, shaping what success looks like for them.

Implications for Educational Policy: Calling for a Paradigm Change

The current Ofsted framework (Ofsted, 2018) is divided into five areas;

1. overall effectiveness,
2. effectiveness of leadership and management
3. quality of teaching, learning and assessment
4. personal development, behaviour and welfare, and
5. outcomes for pupils.

Pupils' academic achievement, along with their school attendance, is assessed within these areas (Ofsted, 2018). As referred to in Chapter Three, Public Health England (2015) contends that the inspection framework acknowledges that the role of teaching is not only to raise pupil achievement, but also to promote their overall social, moral and cultural development. For a school to be judged outstanding in promoting pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, they must be seen to be "…prepared to be reflective about and responsible for their actions as good citizens" (Ofsted, 2018, p.52). The inspection framework (Ofsted, 2018, p.14) states "Learners will progress well from their different starting points and achieve or exceed standards expected for their age" (see Table 10.1). Currently, pupils' starting points are recognised, but the potential impact of their context on their rates of progress is not. Neither is there any leeway for pupils not meeting "age related expectations", regardless of developmental or social need.

There are many contextual influences that may have an impact on the progress of children who have complex needs, as outlined in Chapter Two. Pupils who have special educational needs are more likely to experience worse overall life outcomes than their peers (DfE, 2011). As discussed in Chapter Nine, school attendance and exclusion rates are also worse for children with complex needs (Ofsted, 2010). Of pupils permanently excluded in the UK, one in two have significant mental health issues, compared to one in 50 who do not experience such difficulties (Weale, 2017). There is a strong predictive correlation between

school exclusion as children and later incarceration as adults (Hart & Heaver, 2013; Weale, 2017). Resilience researchers, practitioners and the families of children with complex needs are all in a position to inform policy so that it recognises and addresses these inequalities.

Re-referring to the relationship with BoingBoing I discussed in Chapter Three, Hart and Aumann (2017) state that the work of this umbrella organisation allows members to collaborate with other service users to try and alter larger social systems so that they respond more appropriately to the needs of children. One of the outcomes of this research has been for myself, and BoingBoing members, to challenge Ofsted and its conceptualisation of achievement for children with complex needs. Hart et al. (2016, p.6) assert "…many practitioners feel comfortable with and skilled in helping people to make micro "resilient moves" in their lives but feel less empowered and knowledgeable about influencing or challenging policies". Practitioner knowledge could inform educational policy, as it informed the conceptualisation of the Resilience Framework (Hart et al., 2007).

Staff at Eleanor Smith School have an on-going relationship with BoingBoing and colleagues at the University of Brighton. This cross-section of parents, practitioners and academics wish to inform and shape policy (Hart and Aumann, 2017). In 2015 I met with the lead inspector responsible for special educational needs nationally to discuss the requirements of the Ofsted framework and the lack of recognition of what progress or achievement may look like for pupils with complex needs. He asserted Ofsted already held a contextual view of pupil progress that does not prioritise academic success alone. However, in a personal communication with another lead Ofsted inspector who wished to remain anonymous (Anonymous, 14th February, 2018), she confirmed that Ofsted's focus is on academic achievement in English and mathematics and that any other progress made by children is viewed as secondary to this. Evidence of this is seen in Table 10.1 where English and maths are specifically referred to in three of the five Ofsted (2018) grade descriptors used to judge school effectiveness.

At this point, the impact of my research on Ofsted's policy has been extremely limited. To address this, schools could collectively exert influence on Ofsted to change its framework for assessing pupils with complex needs, while recognising the potential impact of their contexts. Given the knowledge resilience-based practitioners and researchers have of the typically poor predicted life prognoses for children with complex needs, it is essential they use this to inform educational policymakers. Table 10.1 is a resilience-based framework I have developed and suggest Ofsted could use to judge how schools support children with complex needs. This table summarises the "outstanding" grade descriptors of the five Ofsted (2018) evaluation headings. It presents possible questions and sources of evidence inspectors could use to appraise how schools holistically support the resilience of children with complex needs in an ecological manner.

Summarised Ofsted Framework (2018) Grade Descriptor for "Outstanding"	Questions to Consider Use of Strategies from the Resilience Framework	Suggested Sources of Evidence that May be seen in Schools by Ofsted
1. Overall effectiveness: ▪ Quality of teaching, learning and assessment ▪ Pupils thrive through promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and physical well-being ▪ Safeguarding is effective	How are achievements highlighted and celebrated? What does the school do to make school life work as well as possible? How does the school support familial needs e.g. good enough housing, access to transport being safe that their child has enough sleep? How are disadvantaged pupils' contexts recognised and supported to ensure their safety? How are tried and tested treatments being accessed by the school to support the overall well-being of its pupils?	Pupil Premium funding is used to provide equitable opportunities for disadvantaged pupils Pupils can articulate good times and places in their contexts Pupils have people around them that they have built friendships and relationships with that enable them to thrive both in and out of school Families and partners work together to support children e.g. a single parent family has respite to ensure leisure and play for the child and the parent has access to sleep Safeguarding responses to disadvantaged pupils lessen the likelihood of their being at risk in the future
2. Effectiveness of leadership and management: ▪ Expectations are high ▪ Relationships are exemplary ▪ Outcomes are consistently improved ▪ Progress is rising across the curriculum, and in English and maths ▪ Deployment of targeted funding ▪ Acting upon pupil, parent and staff views ▪ A learning culture for all ▪ Staff have time to reflect, take risks and innovate ▪ The curriculum is inspiring ▪ British values are at the heart of the school's work ▪ Discrimination and prejudice not tolerated ▪ External partners are accessed	How are pupils supported to understand other people's feelings? Is this modelled by staff? How are both staff and pupils encouraged to be brave? How does the school ensure pupils are free from prejudice and discrimination?	Pupils speak about themselves, with a sense of confidence and purpose; they know who they are The school taps into good influences both in and outside of the school that support relationships and the curriculum offer Relationships among all members of the school community, including parents and outside partners, are positive and respectful Pupils have allocated responsibilities, particular to their strengths and interests e.g. administrative staff have pupils in the office "working" with them
3. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: ▪ Teachers constantly demand more of pupils ▪ Those who are falling behind are supported ▪ Understanding is checked systematically, feedback is effective ▪ Pupils are equipped with literacy and numeracy skills ▪ High expectations are held for all ▪ Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes ▪ Pupils learn through extra-curricular activities ▪ Parents are involved in their child's learning and progress ▪ Diversity is valued	How does the curriculum support activities outside of core and foundation subjects? e.g. if a child is a talented artist, how is this pursued outside of a one-hour art lesson per week? How are interests, both in and outside of school life fostered? How do staff identify what these are? How are interests developed extending outside of school into the wider community? How does the school ensure pupils know how to organise themselves? Do parents understand how to support resilience in their child to improve attainment?	Pupils are encouraged to have a laugh and remember that if today was tough, tomorrow is another day When mistakes or 'failure' occur, rose tinted glasses are used to put this into perspective and pupils are encouraged to lean on others when necessary When things go wrong, pupils express hope Pupils are aware of what they need throughout the day e.g. sports equipment, clothing, where to be, what time to be there Parents are able to articulate their understanding of resilience and how they can play a part in supporting it in their child Parents are part of the whole school resilience-building approach

4. Personal development, behaviour and welfare: ▪ Pupils are proud of their achievements ▪ Pupils show respect for others' ideas ▪ Careers guidance in secondary schools is aspirational ▪ Pupils show behaviour and have attitudes that equip them for post-school life ▪ Attendance is high ▪ Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves healthy and to stay safe ▪ Pupils are thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and wider society	What opportunities does the school provide for staff and pupils to have access to play and leisure? How does the school ensure pupils opportunities to 'give back' to others and to their wider communities? How is a sense of having responsibilities and obligations toward others instilled and practiced? How are healthy relationships developed and maintained? What does the school do to gather people around pupils that they can count on? Can pupils name what foods are healthy? Do they have basic cookery skills? What skills do pupils have to keep themselves safe? How do they learn and apply these skills? How are parents supported to do this? How is a sense of belonging instilled in the school ethos? How do staff know pupils' perceptions of this?	Both primary AND secondary schools actively help pupils map out career or life plans Mentors are engaged for pupils Pupils are seen to take responsibility for calming down and soothing themselves Pupils have time to debate and discuss ideas openly and to practice understanding boundaries and keeping within them Pupils can articulate how they solve real life problems Pupils have cookery and physical education lessons that promote healthy lifestyles and mental well-being All members of the school talk about its wider place in the community with pride Pupils actively lobby to address inequalities they identify that affect themselves and others in health, social or educational contexts
5. Outcomes for pupils: ▪ Pupils make substantial progress through the year in all curriculum areas, including English and maths ▪ The progress of disadvantaged pupils from starting points in English and maths is above average compared to that of others with the same starting points ▪ Pupils can articulate their knowledge and understanding in an age-appropriate way ▪ Pupils read widely and to a high standard ▪ If attainment is below national averages, it is rapidly improving ▪ Career plans for disadvantaged pupils is supported by preparation for the next stage of their education, training or employment	What does the pupil, parents/carers and staff consider progress IS for THIS child? What does this progress look like? How does the school encourage preparation for training and work opportunities now and upon leaving secondary education? What life skills have been identified for individual pupils as needing support? How is this done? How does the school predict a good experience of someone or something new and promote this happening and also to plan to build upon this later? How are pupils equipped with budgeting and money management skills for independent life outside of school? Are pupils able to speak about their views and circumstances in a way that is appropriate to their level of understanding and need? Can pupils share their achievements and progress in school with adults? Can incremental progress and mastery from starting points be evidenced in parental views, outside agency input by staff and pupils themselves?	Life skills are valued and actively taught for future education, employment or training Vocational pathways exist for pupils to access Work experience placements are part of the curriculum Outside partners and parents are active in the school, promoting their work, qualifications and experiences Qualifications that match pupil's career plans are accessible and encouraged Pupils understand how to handle money and can budget for themselves Pupils voice how they self-manage and how they have learnt to do this. They can describe situations that they found difficult to deal with in the past and how they negotiate these more effectively now Progress is being made from pupils' starting points, their individual contexts and circumstances that may have accelerated or impeded this is recognised and the resources and support put in to do so are appropriate

THE NOBLE TRUTHS			
ACCEPTING	**CONSERVING**	**COMMITMENT**	**ENLISTING**
What is this pupil's context? What familial, school and community supports are there already that can be accessed? What are this pupil's starting points?	What are these pupil's strengths? How are they being fostered, built on and developed for their post-school future?	Who can and will be available to this pupil for long-term support? A key worker? A mentor? A family support worker?	Who in this pupil's ecology can be called upon at various levels to ensure she or he is independent, has access to equitable resources, knows where to find support when needed in the future?

Table 10.1: A Suggested Resilience-Based Framework for Ofsted to Judge School Support for Children with Complex Needs

This suggested inspection framework does not undervalue the importance of achievement or progress. Resilience research does not negate the need to have high expectations and aspirations for children (Agasisti et al., 2018; Bryan, 2005). It supports having such expectations for children with complex difficulties and provides practitioners, families and researchers alike with strategies that may be used to enable this (Cowen, Wyman & Work, 1996). Having aspirations for the future and celebrating achievements are resilience-promoting factors for children (Hart, et al., 2007). This is certainly not to indicate that it is not possible for a child with complex needs to accomplish the same, if not better, outcomes compared to their counterparts. It is simply to contend that they may need more support and a broader view taken to be able to do so (see Figure 10.1 & Table 10.1). In my work, pupils identified that the school helps them to "be better" and staff discussed the importance of having long term aspirations for them. Ofsted's framework for children with complex needs could assess how ambitious schools' aspirations and the support of these are as Table 10.1 suggests. At the time of writing this thesis, I had not had the opportunity to present the suggested inspection framework to Ofsted itself, but had, however, discussed it's applicability with colleagues in the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), of which Eleanor Smith is a part. They viewed it positively and as having potential application to children with complex needs. The Chief Executive of the MAT is keen for us to develop this further and to present arguments made in this thesis, alongside the suggested framework to Ofsted for consideration of using it with children with complex needs in schools.

My contention is that the research base encourages high expectations (Bryan, 2005), not blind ones. Barker (2000, in Friedli, 2009, p.22) succinctly shares this challenge, saying "…what would the resilient child have been able to do, and to contribute to the community…if he or she had never had to overcome disadvantage?" Ofsted does not consider Lerner's (2004) perspective that while all people are alike none of us are the same, discussed in Chapter Three. Lerner's assertion makes Ofsted's (2018) age and national average related expected standards for children with complex needs somewhat nonsensical, especially given the varying impact and experiences of difficulties and contexts they may face. My research suggests that pupils made progress, but not at the same rate as their mainstream peers. Application of an ecological model to educational policy may guide and change the conceptualisation of achievement and progress for children with complex needs.

This research shows that a package of resilience-based, ecological practice had a positive impact on pupils. Lerner (2006) argues that people need to be aligned with the assets in their contexts, for example, in schools, to maximise their strengths and to realise their full potential. The mechanisms that staff and pupils identified were the reciprocal positive relationships (the more healthy relationships the better, Hart et al., 2007, p.72) that demonstrated care, thoughtfulness and listening, along with providing a sense of success through strengths-based practice (fostering talents, p.138), and the strong sense of belonging fostered (p.68) in the school. The Ofsted framework could illuminate some of these mechanisms as areas for inspection in school reviews, as Table 10.1 outlines. Inspectors could examine how staff develop relationships with pupils and their families, what they do to encourage and support pupil strengths, or to determine how schools support children's sense of belonging to their wider communities.

These are all indicators of progress for children and could be included in Ofsted's evaluation of achievements made from their "starting points" (Ofsted, 2018). Educational policy may address this by reframing a model currently based on those living without complex needs and redefine progress for children who experience such needs (Bottrell, 2009; Miller, 1996). In their report on whole school, resilience-promoting programmes, Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts and Peereboom (2016 p. 39) state that "…holding [an] 'incremental' view of one's ability, and adopting a mastery orientation to the process of learning, appear to lie at the heart of children's capacity to be resilient…" As the school in this research decided to adopt a more sensitive assessment tool to measure the social and emotional progress being made by pupils (see Chapter Nine), so too could national measures of academic achievement be more incrementally sensitive for children with complex needs. Schools could also be judged on how they support pupils to develop holistically, excelling in areas of strengths or talents. From these findings, I would suggest it may be more helpful for Ofsted to take a holistic, incremental view of the progress of pupils who have complex needs.

Ofsted may also be interested in canvassing the voices of children and families to ascertain what their perceptions and experiences of 'success' and 'progress' are (see Table 10.1). These may look similar or different to the current inspection framework (Ofsted, 2018) for children who have complex needs. Inspectors could do this by asking how pupils with poor mental health are being supported, or how peer relationships are being developed for a young person who is socially isolated. To judge how a school tackles the attendance issues referred to in Chapter Nine, Ofsted could take an ecological view of how contextual issues were identified and addressed, for instance, transport (Hart et al., 2007 p.54), parental engagement (Walker et al., 2017) or what motivates a pupil to be at school. This would allow schools to present the context of those pupils and to demonstrate what they are doing to relentlessly support their needs holistically as the Department of Health (2015) and Public Health England (2015) demand. As part of their "Resilience Revolution" implementing Resilient Therapy, the Resilience Framework (Hart et al, 2007), the Academic Resilience Approach and related approaches, Blackpool is developing an Ofsted Framework, led by young people which will be relevant to future research in this area (see www.blackpool.gov.uk, 2018). This is an opportunity for educational policymakers to listen to, and work with those who live the very experiences they are forming impressions of and judging.

Rather than "Applying what is defined as a positive outcome within mainstream contexts to disadvantaged and marginalised groups" (Hart et al., 2016, p.8), policymakers need to include those who live the experience so that their voice informs the outcomes. Our work has shown that using a whole school approach, with all staff using resilience-based practice may address some of these issues. The data demonstrates this approach having a positive impact on pupils at Eleanor Smith School. Application of the Academic Resilience Approach also shows that it can be effective in mainstream settings (BoingBoing, 2014). Policy should not only encourage (PHE, 2015), but make statutory approaches that endorse the holistic well-being of all children in schools. Whole school approaches, such as Academic Resilience hold this view (BoingBoing, 2014). This leads to research considerations for the future which now follow.

Implications for Research: Where Next?

Tackling Inequalities: Researchers Informing Policy

Parallel to my argument for Ofsted taking an inequalities view of the progress made by children with complex needs, researchers alike could include them in investigations relating to their experiences. Research that accesses pupil's views of what achievement may look like for them would need to consider the methodological issues I raised in Chapter Five. Lynch and Baker (2005) encourage researchers to attempt to understand and share the differences those involved in their research experience if they have not already, by including them directly, rather than learning about them abstractly. They assert "The first principle that must guide us in respecting difference in education…is that of inclusion" (Lynch & Baker, 2005, p.153). By directly accessing and asking pupils about their lived experiences in this research I was able to glean their feelings of belonging, the importance of relationships, their reliance on staff and some of the mechanisms that contributed toward these feelings. Without having done this, I could have been in the position of making incorrect assumptions about pupils' lived experiences at the school. However, they informed me that they felt the support they received from the school "helped [them] to be better" (see Chapter Eight). Consideration needs to be given to asking children with complex needs how they experience school life by using methodologies that are accessible to them, as outlined in Chapters Three and Five.

Resilience research could also challenge distal processes at the macro level more than it currently does. This would address some of the concerns raised by Hart, Gagnon, Eryigit-Madzwamuse, Cameron, Aranda and Heaver (2016) of the current lack of research that includes those who experience the impact of the inequalities being investigated. Farthing (2016) asserts this may be facilitated by resilience researchers when they include those being studied *in* the study; for research to be done *with*, not *at* (see Chapter Three). Lynch and Baker (2005, p.158) concur, writing "Unless educationally disadvantaged groups in particular are involved in the planning and development process in education, other inequalities cannot be meaningfully challenged". My research has not tackled inequalities to any degree. However, by including children with complex needs in the investigation, my contribution has been to illuminate how they experience school and what they view as supportive of them.

It would be of interest for resilience researchers in the future to consider consulting families and comparing the impact policies with a distributive justice orientation (Espinoza, 2007) have on children with complex needs. The findings of such research could then be used to challenge institutional and economic structures. If this is not done, it is likely the neo-liberal politics of responsibilisation (Bottrell, 2013; Hart et al, 2016; see Chapter Three), will continue for children with complex needs. Worse exclusion and absence rates (DfE, 2017a), poorer mental health (Friedli, 2009) and higher likelihood of incarceration for children with special educational needs (Hart & Heaver, 2013; Weale, 2017) would otherwise be predicted to persist and prevail if nothing is done to address the contexts within which they currently exist.

Research in the field also has the capacity to challenge the structural and political systems in place that enable the status quo to remain for children with complex needs. Hart et al. (2016 p.5) write "…it is time for resilience to go beyond understanding how individuals cope

with adversity, to challenge the structures that create disadvantages in the first place and contribute to the development of a new wave of research that unites resilience research and practice development with social justice and activism". While the contribution from this thesis has not contributed to systemic change of inequalities, it does answer some of the critiques of resilience research raised in Chapter Three. Children with complex needs have been included in the questioning and understanding of how staff practice has shaped their lived experiences at Eleanor Smith School. Accessible and non-threatening methods were used to enable their voices to be captured, as outlined in Chapter Six. By using the chosen methods, a deeper insight into their views has been gained. Hart et al. (2016) support inclusion of children with complex needs in resilience-based research, writing "From this research, an insight into how resilient moves can set…in motion chains of events…that raises the profile of and strengthens day-to-day research and practice [and] also encourages academics, practitioners and policy makers to tackle systemic inequalities" (p.9). This research is a small step toward "changing the odds" (Hart et al., 2016 p.7); staff practice in the school in this research has changed and pupils with complex needs have shared their experiences of these changes. Post data collection phase, other schools are doing so now nationally via the AR Approach, as already described.

My work has contributed to challenging policy in a small-scale way, by offering an alternative Ofsted framework that could be used for children with complex needs nationally (see Table 10.1). This challenges educational policymakers and practitioners to consider what progress or achievement may look like for these children. For one child it may be that they now have sustainable friendships. For another, it may be that they are making progress in English because they can now self-soothe and manage their feelings when they previously expected to 'fail' in that lesson. I have also responded to Hart et al.'s (2016 p.5) task for resilience researchers to "…incorporate inequalities perspectives when working with children and young people [assuming]…that adults know best" This work has also answered Hart et al.'s (2016) challenge to researchers to contribute toward systemic and policy level change, although still only on a small scale. At the inception of my work, as stated in Chapter Three, there was a paucity of whole school approaches, involving all staff in collective investigations. This work and the resultant dissemination to other schools and organisations has contributed some knowledge to mainstream schools implementing whole-school, resilience-building initiatives into their settings. In the following section, I outlined an opportunity for researchers to consider secondary aged young people.

Secondary Pupils – Developmental Differences
My research focused on primary aged pupils. Staff feedback during the Collaborative Inquiry sessions contributed to implications for practice and research regarding application of the Resilience Framework with secondary aged pupils. An example of this is the work of the Camden police officer, described in Chapter Nine. While this intervention at the microsystemic (individual, peers, school) and exosystemic levels (extended family, community, parent's work) appeared to have some positive impact on secondary pupils while at school (as reported by staff), outside of school hours remains a challenge. Many pupils in secondary phase education at the school are involved with the police and the local Youth Offending Team (YOT) for criminal activity. Research tells us that 25% of the young offenders' population have special educational needs (Hart and Heaver, 2013). Friedli (2009) outlines the interplay of special educational needs, school performance and social exclusion,

which sometimes results in incarceration (see Chapter Two). The Institute for Public Policy Research estimates that out of a prison population of 86,000, 54,000 were excluded during their time at school (Weale, 2017).

Gang involvement in Newham, and for secondary aged pupils at Eleanor Smith, is a concerning social issue. Newham has the third highest knife crime rate in London (Al-Othman, 2015). Of the acid attacks committed in London in the past year, one third of them occurred in Newham (see BBC, 20th March, 2017). During the time of this research, one pupil has been sent to prison for murder, and multiple pupils have been stabbed, or participated in stabbing others or assaulting individuals with acid in their local communities. In 2017, a 16-year-old pupil was shot and killed. These pupils all have friends and families that have supported them over time. The same ecological approach has been used with them at the school as the primary pupils experienced, and for the same period.

This raises the questions of what is not working, why not and what else could be done for them; differing mechanisms may exist or be required for secondary pupils to facilitate resilience with and for them. Perhaps their identity and sense of belonging needs are not being fulfilled outside of school. Pyrooz, Decker and Webb (2010) state that gang involvement provides young people with some of their social and emotional needs - the need to belong to a greater social collective. If secondary pupils had been included in my research they may have fed back different experiences and perceptions of relationships and their sense of belonging in the school and their communities, compared to primary aged pupils (see Chapters Eight and Nine). It remains uncertain whether such difficulties may not be so pronounced for secondary aged pupils, if they were exposed to a whole school, resilience-building approach in their earlier school careers.

It was not within the scope of this work, however, to tackle such a sizeable concern. A future challenge for researchers applying and researching Resilient Therapy, the Resilience Framework and the ARA is to consider how to translate the resilience-based work that contributed to such a strong sense of belonging in primary pupils in this work to their secondary peers. An investigation into the efficacy of the Framework as a tool to assist fulfilling the social and emotional needs of young people with complex needs in their wider communities could be useful. Hill and Hart (2017) describe an approach that supported kindship carers to do just that whereby carers are encouraged to find their own solutions based on the bi-directional relationships between carers and children, and others who support them in their ecologies. Future work with parents and carers may support adolescents' sense of belonging to the wider communities when they are not in school. It may be possible to use resilience-based practice to fulfil young people's need to belong to parts of their communities that are more pro social, with fewer long term risks to their futures. Such research may need to follow children's stories longitudinally. This could allow for identification of mechanisms at work for children as they develop into young people. Lerner's (2004; see Chapter Three) concept of the plasticity of human development over time also supports that experiences and perceptions may be different for secondary aged young people compared to their younger counterparts. An opportunity remains here for future researchers to pursue.

Summary

The learning from this thesis is directly transferable into mainstream school practice. This is apparent as Ofsted holds the same inspection criteria for special schools as it does for mainstream schools. Eleanor Smith School has achieved a "good" rating (the second highest awarded by Ofsted) consistently for the past 20 years. Coupled with this, practice at the school has contributed to the whole school approach, Academic Resilience. This approach is currently being used in mainstream school settings nationally (BoingBoing, 2014). Successful implementation of EHC plans is dependent on inter-agency, partnership work, and I suggest that the fundamental principles of EHC Plans and Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007), upon which the Resilience Framework is based, are similar. If the Noble Truths of Resilient Therapy were used to guide the writing of EHC plans the key agents of that plan may work together more successfully than has been the case historically, as highlighted in Chapter Two. At policy level, my view is that Ofsted could conceptualise achievement and success incrementally and individually for children with complex needs. This would occur if Ofsted took an ecological view of pupil development that was informed by fourth wave resilience research with a social justice lens, referred to in Chapter Three. At the research level, there are opportunities to ensure the inclusion of children with complex needs in future work and to access secondary pupils' views and lived experiences, regarding how the Resilience Framework may be used to best support them holistically.

Summarised, the recommendations from my research are as follows:

1. Prioritise regular, collective meetings; schedule these so all staff may contribute
2. Encourage use of a shared language among staff
3. Promote an open learning environment that encourages trust and mutual collaboration, with an opportunity to share practice
4. Provide regular training updates and dissemination of evidence-based practice
5. Involve ALL staff
6. Include those the research is about in the research design, methodology and analysis
7. Leadership support is essential
8. Collective energy and clear communication are important
9. Assess organisational "readiness" before beginning implementation of new programmes
10. Action research may maintain the sustainability of new initiatives through meaningful participation
11. There are resources that are widely available and free – use them
12. Interdependence and effective collaboration needs to exist for optimal partnership work to occur
13. The Resilience Framework can be used as a starting point when agreeing actions and outcomes for Education, Health and Care Plans for children
14. The Noble Truths of Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007) could be applied to maximise the effectiveness of inter-agency co-operation
15. Involving commissioners of services in EHC planning meetings may support them to resource resilience-building approaches for children
16. Give consideration to equity over equality; some need more to 'level the playing field' to begin with

17. Use school monies to support outcomes for children creatively; additional adults do not always have a positive impact on learning
18. School inspectors could take an ecological view of achievement for children with complex needs. This could include making a strengths-based assessment of success
19. School inspectors could ask pupils and their families what they view as success or progress in their lived experience and how schools promote and support this
20. Include children with complex needs and their families in research that is about them
21. An opportunity exists for resilience researchers to challenge the institutions and systems that maintain inequalities
22. Consider how the RF may apply to secondary-aged pupils, especially outside of school hours in their local communities

This work has spurred international interest and assisted other schools, along with Eleanor Smith School, to make global links. The approach of my work recognises the importance of ALL staff in a school, and the potential impact they can have on children when making resilient moves has demonstrated some positive outcomes for pupils. At the outset of this research, schools were not applying the concept of involving all staff as potential significant adults to pupils. Educational policy makers (DfE, 2016; DoH, 2015; PHE, 2015) share the same vision and open mindedness held by schools who are implementing whole school approaches; especially the ones set in challenging contexts. It is possible to support better outcomes and the resilience of children with complex needs. The mechanisms that facilitate this do not have to be expensive, complicated, grand overtures. They may take the form of litter picking alongside the site supervisor before school begins or donating a disused toy to an ill child at a local hospice. Such holistic support and development of young people is now recognised as a significant factor that empowers them to make participatory, active contributions to their communities as children and later, as adults.

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Appendices

Resilience Framework for Children and Young People

Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow 2007 www.boingboing.org.uk					
	BASICS	**BELONGING**	**LEARNING**	**COPING**	**CORE SELF**
SPECIFIC APPROACHES	Good enough housing	Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	Make school/college life work as well as possible	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	Instil a sense of hope
		Help child/YP understand their place in the world		Being brave	
	Enough money to live	Tap into good influences	Engage mentors for children/YP	Solving problems	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings
	Being safe	Keep relationships going			
		The more healthy relationships the better	Map out career or life plan	Putting on rose-tinted glasses	Help the child/YP to know her/himself
	Access & transport	Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope		Fostering their interests	
	Healthy diet	Get together people the child/YP can count on	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	Calming down & self-soothing	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself
		Responsibilities & obligations			
	Exercise and fresh air	Focus on good times and places	Highlight achievements	Remember tomorrow is another day	Foster their talents
	Enough sleep	Make sense of where child/YP has come from		Lean on others when necessary	
	Play & leisure	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Develop life skills		There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them
	Being free from prejudice & discrimination	Make friends and mix with other children/YPs		Have a laugh	
NOBLE TRUTHS					
ACCEPTING		**CONSERVING**	**COMMITMENT**		**ENLISTING**

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997, in Hall 2010)

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name .... Male/Female

Date of Birth.. ...

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	☐	☐	☐
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	☐	☐	☐
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	☐	☐	☐
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	☐	☐	☐
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	☐	☐	☐
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	☐	☐	☐
Many worries, often seems worried	☐	☐	☐
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	☐	☐	☐
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	☐	☐	☐
Has at least one good friend	☐	☐	☐
Often fights with other children or bullies them	☐	☐	☐
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	☐	☐	☐
Generally liked by other children	☐	☐	☐
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	☐	☐	☐
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	☐	☐	☐
Kind to younger children	☐	☐	☐
Often lies or cheats	☐	☐	☐
Picked on or bullied by other children	☐	☐	☐
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	☐	☐	☐
Thinks things out before acting	☐	☐	☐
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	☐	☐	☐
Gets on better with adults than with other children	☐	☐	☐

Many fears, easily scared

Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span

....

Signature   Date

Parent/Teacher/Other (please specify:)   213

Thank you very much for your help

Resilience-based Practice Audit (Pre RF-Implementation) and Survey (Post RF Implementation)

Prior to the resilience training on December 14th, we want to get an idea of how much people already know about and use resilience with our pupils. The results will inform staff training on resilience in the future that will develop the skills and knowledge needed to promote better outcomes for our pupils. It will also help us measure how much impact future resilience training has on staff and pupils. Please be open and honest and there is no need to identify yourself if you don't wish to do so, the information can be kept anonymous. You may also want to discuss any issues that arise from this survey with your appraiser in SAM meetings, or with Senior Leaders.

a)   How confident would you be at describing what resilience is to a colleague?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Average		Very

b)   How do you rate your understanding of what resilience is?

1	2	3	4	5
I don't have a clue!		OK		Very clear

c)   How confident are you at describing why some are more resilient than others?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Average		Very

d)   How confident are you at applying your understanding of resilience to your pupils now?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Average		Very

e)   How often do you talk about resilience with others?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		A lot

f)   How much impact do you feel you are having on your pupils' resilience at the moment?

1	2	3	4	5
None		Some		A lot

g)   What rating would you give to the overall resilience of pupils in your class right now, in total?

1	2	3	4	5
Low		Medium		High

h)   **Can you describe what do you do now to improve your pupils' resilience?**

_____
_____
_____

i)   **What else do you think you might be able to do?**

_____
_____
_____

j)   **Are there things that get in the way of your doing this? What?**

_____
_____
_____

k)   **What would be useful for your practice or understanding of resilience in future training?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and completing the survey – it is very much appreciated!

Resilience Measure (MacPherson, Hart and Heaver, 2012)

Appendix Three

Tick the boxes below to help give you and the Hannah a picture of you and your 'resilience'. Resilience means your ability to deal with difficult times and manage life when it is tough.

Think about the past month and tick the box according to how much you agree with the statement

	No – I don't agree	A little bit	Quite alot	Yes – All the time
1. I make time in my life for leisure activities				
2. I am happy with my life up till now				
3. I can take on new challenges and succeed at them				
4. Coping with difficult timeshas made me a stronger person				
5. I am good at organizing my time				
6. I easily make friends				
7. I have someone who can help me when I need it				
8. I feel in control of my life				
9. I can calm myself down if I feel upset or stressed				
10. I am proud of what I have achieved in life				
11. I have a friend or family member who is proud of me				
12. I can learn new skills				
13. I feel I belong (to a group, a community or a place)				

Do you think this arts project has helped you to be more resilient in any way? If so please try to explain how here and over the page:

Proposed Collaborative Inquiry Schedule of Questions

Session One	Welcome, purpose, ground rules, confidentiality within the room
	Review information sheet and consent forms
	Review research questions, what do they think about them? Can they suggest others we could investigate together?
	Reflect as a group, have you been using the resilience framework? Yes/how, no/why
	Has your practice changed since not/using the RF? How?
	Do you think the school is achieving better outcomes as a result? What is your evidence for this? What are the feelings and perceptions of the group?
	Finish with questions for next session to consider

Session Two	Review consent to participate
	Review the outcomes pupils are achieving from last session, how does resilience-based practice support these? Examples
	What are you doing that facilitates these outcomes? ie the mechanisms
	What mechanisms might be serving as barriers to achieving the outcomes aimed for with resilient based practice?
	Is there anything else that you consider to be working well, or any other barriers? Examples
	Finish with questions for next session to consider

Session Three	Review consent to participate
	Reflect back on answers given in sessions one and two, in a "perfect utopia", what would it look like to see the RF being used successfully in schools with children with complex needs?
	What precludes this from happening now?
	How far along the journey is your practice from this "perfect utopia" now?
	What would assist you to achieve this practice?
	Any other issues not covered in the three sessions that have been raised for any group members

Session Four	Present data analysis to group in sections
	Discuss, clarify, seek input to determine accuracy of meaning
	Make corrections together, revise
	Re-read
	Distribute for final reading with February 2014 deadline

## Actual Collaborative Inquiry Schedule of Questions

Session One	Welcome, purpose, ground rules, confidentiality within the room
	Review information sheet and consent forms
	Action Research model outline
	What do you think about the research questions? Are there other questions we could think about?
	Have you been using the resilience framework? How?
	Has your practice/the things you do with pupils changed? How?
	What next? Re-refer to the current point on the AR cycle

Session Two	Review ground rules, right to withdraw and consent to participate
	Do you think the school is getting better outcomes/results for pupils? In what way? How do you know?
	What are your feelings about the RF? Any disappointments?
	Review process so far working through the AR cycle
	Finish with questions for next session to consider

Session Three	Review ground rules, right to withdraw and consent to participate
	Reviewed actions agree at meeting 2
	- How are we using the RF in de-briefing meetings?
	- Sharing a common language, child friendly RF wording on certificates
	- Produce a parent and child friendly version of the RF
	How do we measure resilience in our school?
	Involving other members of staff in using the RF – Assistant Cook and Lunchtime Supervisors
	How do we involve parents and Governors more?
	Any other issues not covered in the three sessions that have been raised for any group members

Session Four	Share one transcript per small group (3-4 members) and discuss and highlight key themes that stand out to them
	Present Thematic Analysis that myself and co-analyst have devised so far
	Discuss, clarify, seek input to determine accuracy of meaning
	Make corrections together, revise
	Re-read
	Distributed for final reading February 2014

Body Map Outline for Pupils
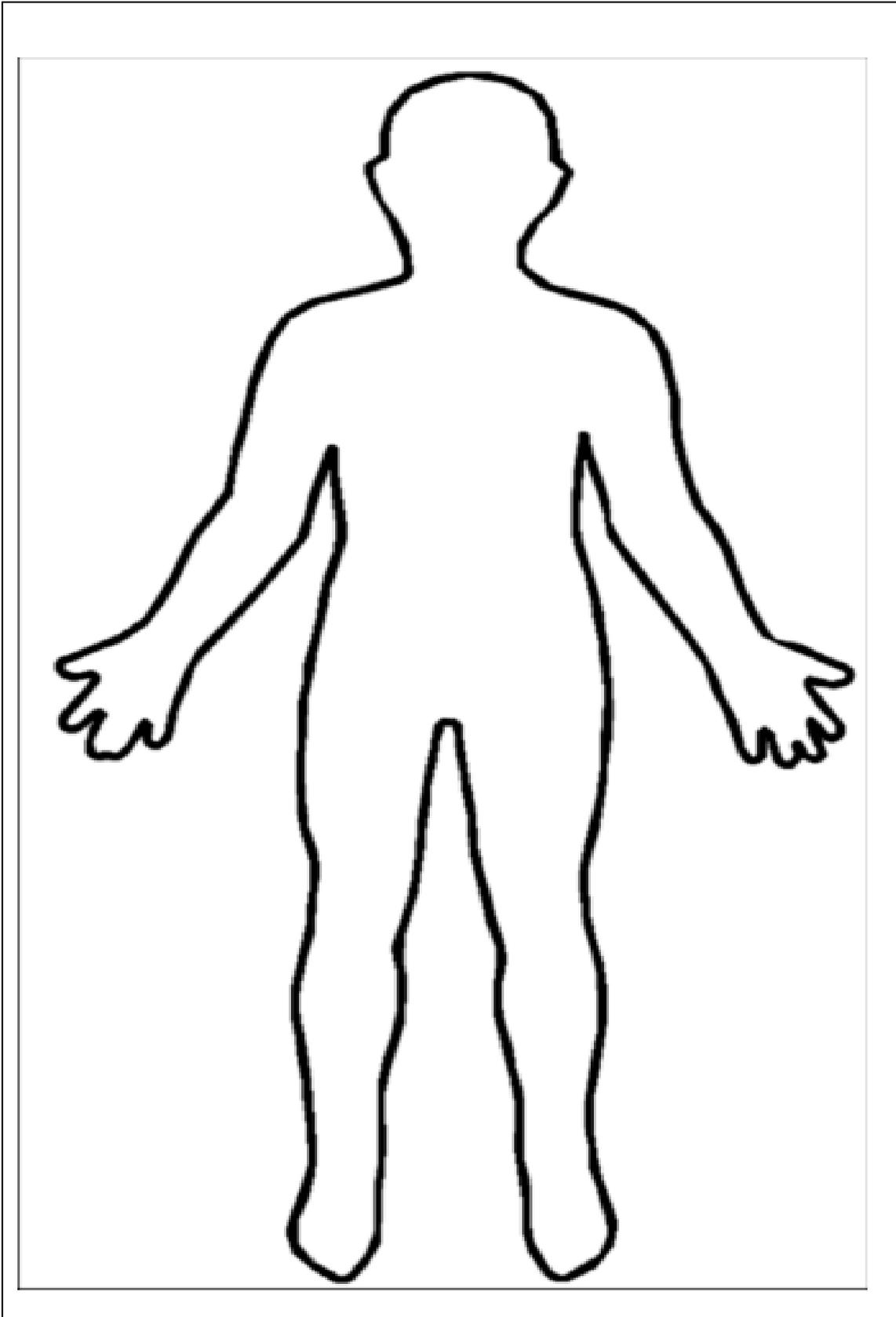
Pictorial Version of Resilience Framework, Version One
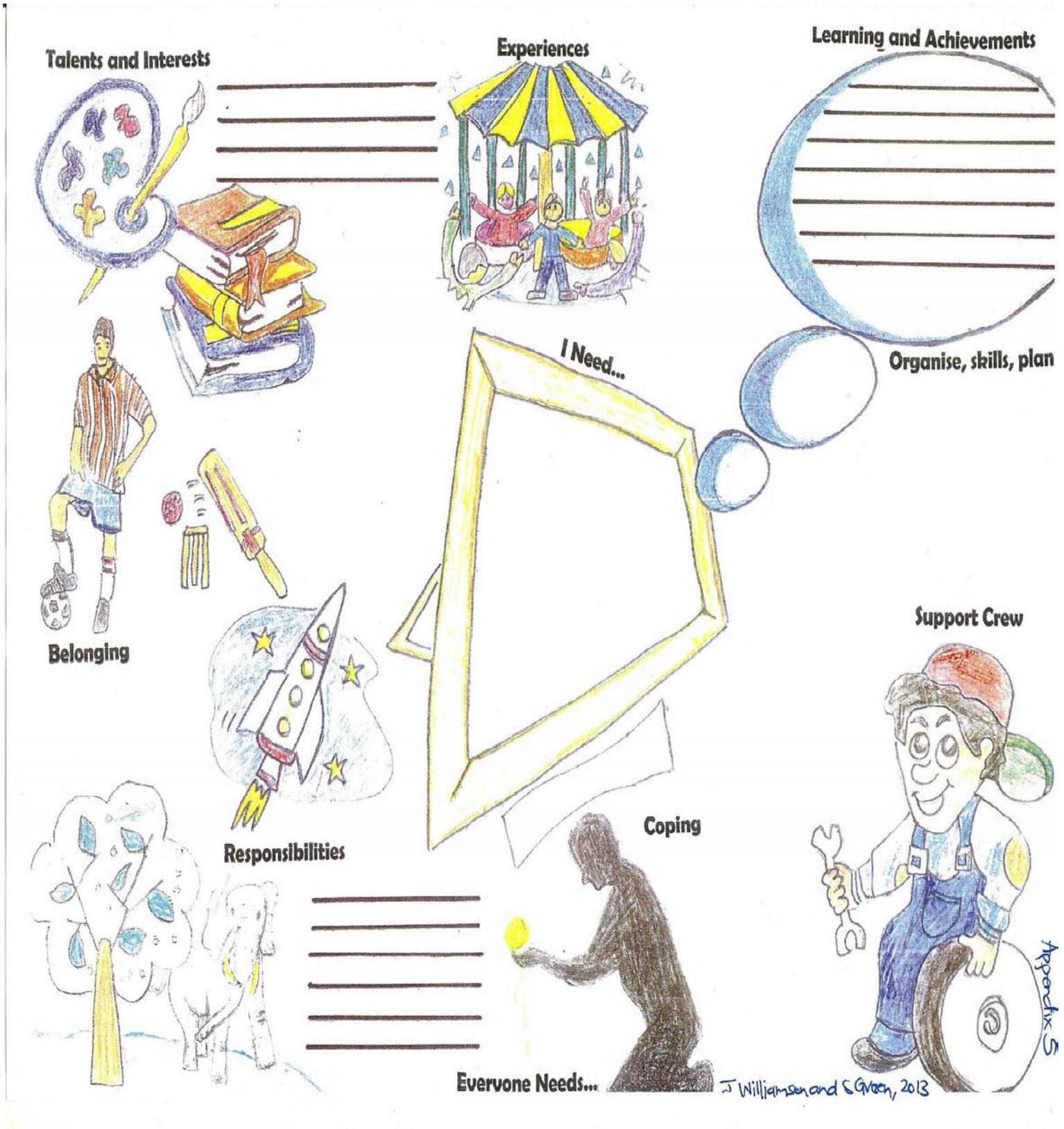
Pictorial Version of Resilience Framework, Version Two

Talents and Interests

Experiences

Learning and Achievements

Organise, skills, pla

I Need...

Belonging

Support People

Responsibilities

Coping

Everyone Needs...

J Williamson and S Green, 2013

Appendix 4

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Analyses

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Negative Ranks	0 a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	9 b	5.00	45.00
SDQ 2 – SDQ 1	Ties	4 c		
	Total	13		

Table 1: Ranks for SDQ Scores

a   SDQ2 < SDQ1

b   SDQ2 > SDQ1

c   SDQ2 = SDQ1

	SDQ2 – SDQ 1
Z	-2.754 b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.006

Table 2: Test Statistics for SDQ scores

a   Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test   b   Based on negative ranks

Attendance Analyses

	Mean	N	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean	
Pair 1 t1	90.1667	12	9.58060	2.76568	
t2	91.8333	12	6.20606	1.79153	

Table 1: Paired Samples Statistics for Attendance

			Paired Differences					
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Pair 1 t1-t2	-1.66667	4.55937	1.31618	-4.56355	1.23022	-1.266	11	.232

Table 2: Paired Samples Test for Attendance

Audit/Survey Analyses

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.918	.917	17

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How confident would you be at describing what resilience is to a colleague?	3.6800	1.09619	50
How do you rate your understanding of what resilience is?	3.5800	1.03194	50
How confident are you at describing why some are more resilient than others?	3.3200	1.09619	50
How confident are you at applying your understanding of resilience to your pupils now?	3.2000	.98974	50
How often do you talk about resilience to others?	3.0600	1.05772	50
How much impact do you feel you are having on your			

pupils' resilience at the moment?	3.0600	.93481	50
What rating would you give to the overall resilience of pupils in your class, right now?	2.8400	.99714	50

Table 2: Item Statistics

	How confident would you be at describing what resilience is to a colleague?	How do you rate your understanding of what resilience is?	How confident are you at describing why some are more resilient than others?	How confident are you at applying your understanding of resilience to your pupils now?	How often do you talk about resilience to others?	How much impact do you feel you are having on your pupils' resilience at the moment?	What rating would you give to the overall resilience of pupils in your class, right now?
How confident would you be at describing what resilience is to a colleague?	1.000	.943	.749	.813	.756	.517	.400
How do you rate your understanding of what resilience is?	.943	1.000	.753	.843	.809	.598	.469
How confident are you at describing why some are more resilient than others?	.749	.753	1.000	.673	.564	.399	.403
How confident are you at applying your	.813	.843	.673	1.000	.788	.538	.447

understanding of resilience to your pupils now?	.756	.809	.564	.788	1.000	.533	.474
How often do you talk about resilience to others?							
How much impact do you feel you are having on your pupils' resilience at the moment?	.517	.598	.399	.538	.533	1.000	.405
What rating would you give to the overall resilience of pupils in your class, right now?	.400	.469	.403	.447	.474	.405	1.000

Table 3: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How confident would you be at describing what resilience is to a colleague?	19.0600	24.343	.868	.899	.893
How do you rate your understanding of what resilience is?	19.1600	24.423	.926	.928	.887
How confident are you at describing why some are more resilient than others?	19.4200	25.759	.716	.604	.910
How confident are you at applying your understanding of resilience to your pupils now?	19.5400	25.478	.848	.754	.896
How often do you talk about resilience to others?	19.6800	25.283	.802	.710	.900
How much impact do you feel you are having on your pupils' resilience at the moment?	19.6800	28.222	.587	.402	.921
What rating would you give to the overall resilience of pupils in your class, right now, in total?	19.9000	28.582	.502	.291	.930

Table 4: Item-Total Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
22.7400	34.931	5.91025	7

Table 5: Scale Statistics

2016/17 Subject Action Plan for Resilience

(complete in September, using **School Improvement Plan and End of Year Progress Data** to inform)

3 priorities (outcomes, what you want to achieve this academic year)

1st Priority Action	When & Who?	How will you monitor it?	Evaluation
Talents Developed as an Intervention			
Both staffrooms have interventions noticeboards with at least one talent and support for this identified and actioned per pupil (both inside/outside school) This includes individual programmes/timetables	Inclusion Team	▪ Every month at inclusion SLT, when pupil academic and SEMH progress is reviewed	
Identified and actioned on RF/Thrive plans by CTs, recognising significant adults and building on strengths	CTs	▪ CTs update on rolling basis (all pupils completed at least once every half term) ▪ SLT reviews every half term	
2nd Priority Action	**When & Who?**	**How will you monitor it?**	**Evaluation**
Resilience/Thrive Individual Plans			
Class teams use format on shared area to update minutes and develop plans (this may include individual behaviour plans) To include RF interventions and Thrive % Budget allocation for interventions	CTs SLT SC & JG	▪ CTs update on rolling basis (all pupils completed at least once every half term) ▪ SLT reviews every half term	
3rd Priority Action	**When & Who?**	**How will you monitor it?**	**Evaluation**

Parents			
Insider's Guide	JC, AB, Z, J	Parent evaluations Presenter de-briefs	
Parent's group	JC, AS, J, S	Consult J and S for parent input to engage different parents and broaden the group size, consider venue, "menu" of topics covered, input to raise funds e.g. fete Include partners e.g. Ed Psychs Write Parent's Charter	
New parent engagement	JC, PL, ER, Jodie, Sam, Zola, Jill, Leanne	Every parent with a newly admitted pupil to be offered a parent "buddy" and lunch with JC and buddy	
Thrive parent support	AS, KP	Identified pupils who are on Thrive individual action plans to receive support using school strategies at home	
Difficult to engage parents	SC, CC, VJ, PL, ER	Ed Psych support, home visits	