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exploring the perspectives of young people living in poverty with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

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Reflections from a pupil referral unit: exploring
the perspectives of young people living in
poverty with social, emotional and mental
health difficulties.

Dulcie Gray

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with
the requirements for award of the degree of Doctorate in Educational
Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law.

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Abstract

This research explored the educational experiences of young people identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) who are also living in poverty. Existing literature has discussed the experiences of young people with SEMH needs and the experiences of young people living in poverty. However, data has shown that a correlation between young people who experience SEMH difficulties and young people who are living in poverty exists within England. Little research has explored this correlation and directly investigated the educational experiences of the young people who experience both these vulnerabilities. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams with participants, aged 15 and 16 years old. All the participants attended a Pupil Referral Unit. A timeline approach was used alongside the interviews to support the young people to share their experiences. Thematic analysis of the interviews identified a number of factors that helped and hindered young people's educational experiences. The six superordinate themes identified were: 'positive experiences in school', 'support', 'transitions', 'relationships', 'affective factors' and 'intersectionality'. A risk and protective factors model combined the findings from this research and the psychological theory of resilience. It is recommended that educational professionals consider focusing on increasing the protective factors and reducing the risk factors for young people with SEMH needs living in poverty experience to support them in their education.

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed: Dulcie Gray

Date: 25/08/2021

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore the educational experiences of young people identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) who are also living in poverty. The young people who participated in the research were all attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at the time when the interviews were conducted. Therefore, this research captures the educational experiences of young people with SEMH needs, living in poverty who were attending a PRU.

I begin this introductory chapter by defining the terminology that I have used in this research, exploring in depth the terms young people, poverty, SEMH and PRU. The context within which the research was conducted will then be discussed making reference to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, the significance of the chosen research topic with specific reference to the political context and current statistical data will be explored. I then discuss the origins of the research and how I came to decide on this topic. Finally, I conclude this chapter by presenting my rationale for this research and an overall summary of each chapter within this thesis.

Definition of Terms

Defining Children and Young People

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2013) defined the term young people to be a person between the ages of 15-24 years old. As this research involves young people between the ages of 15-16 years old the phrase 'young person' is used when making reference to the participants of this research. However, during my literature review I use the terms chosen by the researchers to describe participants in order to remain true to what researchers have reported this includes the terms 'children', 'students', 'pupils' and 'adolescents'.

Defining Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

The term SEMH was first introduced in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice in September 2014 and remained a descriptor of a broad area of SEN in the updated version of SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education (DfE), 2015). Despite the recent introduction of this phrase, the descriptor of SEN has evolved over time and is thought to have originated from the description of pupils being "maladjusted" in the Education Act (1944) (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). The SEN Code of Practice uses the label SEMH to categorise young people who experience a range of needs including becoming withdrawn, displaying challenging or disruptive behaviours, substance misuse, eating disorders,

depression, anxiety, self-harm and diagnosed conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (DfE, 2015). Guidance outlines that the purpose of identifying young people's SEN is to effectively provide support and arrangements to meet their needs rather than to categorise (DfE, 2015). As a practitioner and researcher I acknowledge the problematic nature of labelling and categorising young people however the term SEMH is part of current legislation and education practice. Throughout this research therefore, in line with the current legislation, I use the phrase SEMH as defined by the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2015).

Prior to the introduction of the term SEMH, the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2001) used the phrase 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties' (BESD). The description of who is classified, as having BESD is similar to the description for young people with SEMH needs. The SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2001) described the label BESD to include young people who are withdrawn, isolated, disruptive, hyperactive, have social skills difficulties or presenting with challenging behaviours. Although the label SEMH was not intended as a direct replacement there is significant overlap in these two definitions (DfE, 2015). The phrase 'Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' (SEBD) is another previously used phrase that some researchers have chosen to describe young people with similar presenting needs. Some researchers have argued that the term SEMH assumes that all behavioural difficulties can be categorised within the bracket of mental health and alternatively SEBD acknowledges that behavioural needs can be additional to and separate from mental health difficulties (Tellis-James & Fox, 2016). In my literature review because I have considered research that was completed before the Code of Practice was updated in 2014 I have included literature that has used both of these previously preferred phrases. I make explicit reference to the phrases BESD or SEBD when discussing literature in which these classifications were used.

Defining Poverty

There is a consensus in the literature that defining poverty is important (Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE), 2020). However, controversy remains about how to define it (PSE, 2020). During my literature search I observed that the terminology used within this topic varied greatly and included the terms poverty, deprivation, low socio-economic status, low income and working class. When referring to the existing literature I used the terminology chosen by researchers concerned in order to remain true to what they have reported. However, although these terms are related it is noted that they are not interchangeable (Manstead, 2018). When discussing my own research, I chose to use the term poverty as poverty can be defined broadly to not only describe an individual's economic position but also how

their lack of resources impacts upon living conditions, diet and activities (Townsend, 1979). The term poverty, therefore, can be defined to be when an individual's financial resources are such that they become excluded from the ordinary living customs and routines expected within a society (Townsend, 1979).

I considered the alternative term Social Economic Status (SES). This phrase, similar to poverty, appears frequently in the literature. SES is often defined by an individual's economic position, educational attainment and occupation or, for young people, parental occupation (Manstead, 2018). SES is related to the traditional class system of upper, middle and working classes (Manstead, 2018). However, my research aimed to explore the educational experiences of young people, therefore, I considered the use of educational attainment or parental educational attainment as a marker of social status to be potentially limiting for my participant population and could exclude participants who may be high achieving academically. Furthermore, a family's economic situation may change over time and that could then impact their access to different activities, resources and customs, however, the most used definition of SES, to me, suggested an element of permanence. I felt, considering the context of the research, that changing economic circumstances were increasingly likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Francis-Devine, 2020). Therefore, I decided it was important to avoid terminology that suggested a sense of permanence. It is for these reasons I decided to use the term poverty.

Despite using the term poverty to broadly include the different aspects of an individual's life impacted by their economic position I decided to use the measure of entitlement to free school meals (FSM) as an indication of household income. A young person of compulsory school age may be entitled to FSM if their parents or carers receive financial support from the government (Gov.UK, 2021a). Although this method does not offer an in depth understanding of an individual's economic circumstances, I concluded that it may be the most suitable method and it is a widely used measure of poverty in other research. As all my participants were school aged and all education provisions are required to record data of who receives FSMs, I concluded using FSMs would be the simplest and least intrusive approach to identify if a participant was living within poverty at the time of the research.

Defining a Pupil Referral Unit

All the young people who participated in this doctoral research were attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) when the interviews were conducted. I believe, therefore, it is important to outline a definition of a PRU. The SEN Code of Practice defines a PRU as:

Any school established and maintained by a local authority under section 19 (2) of the Education Act 1996 which is specially organised to provide education for pupils who would otherwise not receive suitable education because of illness, exclusion or any other reason.” (DfE, 2015, p. 284)

As this is the definition outlined in current English legislation, I decided it was the most appropriate definition for this thesis. To provide further context, young people can attend a PRU full time or part time, and it may be a long term or short term placement (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). These factors will be decided based on the needs of the young people (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). After a period of time at a PRU young people may return to mainstream education (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). A PRU aims to provide a safe, nurturing learning environment for young people to develop socially, emotionally and academically (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). PRU’s are not required to follow the national curriculum and young people can benefit from high levels of support provided in these settings (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). All the young people who participated in this doctoral research were attending a PRU following one or multiple permanent exclusions from mainstream education.

Context

COVID-19

The context within which this research was conducted must also be noted as data collection was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this period qualitative researchers faced a unique range of benefits and challenges (Lobe et al, 2020). Primarily the focus was to maintain participant and researcher health; therefore, no face-to-face contact was possible (Jowett, 2020). Instead, virtual platforms were used, and adaptations were made to enable data collection to take place. I discuss the move to electronic data collection in greater detail in my methodology.

Furthermore, it is important to reference the significant impact that COVID-19 had on the education system and young people. All educational provisions were shut in response to the pandemic on 20th March 2020 and gradually reopened between June and September 2020. All educational provisions were then shut for a second time on 5th January 2021 until 8th March 2021. The young people who participated in this research were identified as vulnerable, therefore, they all continued to partially attend school despite the closures. However, the impact of missed education is reported to have been increasingly significant for young people living within poverty due to reduced access to technology, private tuition, free school meals and online teaching (Montacute, 2020). Furthermore, a rapid review

identified food security for young people who receive free school meals, mental health and wellbeing, the development of life skills and young people's independence have all been negatively impacted by the pandemic (Loades et al, 2021). As a result of these findings the review recommends that post pandemic recovery needs to focus on supporting young people's physical and mental health as well as supporting academic catch up (Loades et al, 2021). My research was conducted following students' return to fulltime school on March 8th 2021, however, challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic including those outlined by Loades et al (2021) continued throughout the academic year.

Significance of the Topic

The main focus of this thesis is the educational experiences of young people living within poverty and who have SEMH needs. The 2010 Child Poverty Act was the United Kingdom's (UK) Government Strategy to eradicate child poverty by 2020 (Child Poverty Act, 2010). However, the act was repealed in 2016 and despite the government strategies it was reported that in the tax year 2019 to 2020, 23% of children and young people were living in relative poverty and this percentage increased when house costs were factored in (Francis-Devine, 2021), (relative poverty considers households with an income below 60% of the median in that year). Furthermore, although the author stated it was too early to accurately unpick the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is predicted that low-income families will be most significantly affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic (Francis-Devine, 2021). Therefore, despite the initial aim to end child poverty in the UK by 2020 it is instead predicted that poverty among low-income families may increase as a result of the global pandemic. This outlines the current context for young people living in poverty in the UK. I will now discuss statistics that highlight the impact of poverty on young people's education.

The Education in England Annual Report (Hutchinson et al, 2020) is an impartial and evidenced based report that aims to promote equal education for all by highlighting current educational data and statistics. In 2020 the report outlined that the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils who were not has stopped decreasing and instead there are indications to suggest this gap is beginning to widen again (Hutchinson et al, 2020). The report highlighted that, on average, GCSE students living in poverty in England were 18.4 months behind their peers in attainment (Hutchinson et al, 2020). The same report outlined that the attainment data for GCSE students identified as having SEN indicated they were, on average, 24.4 months behind their peers and this increased to 41.1 months behind peers for students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (Hutchinson et al, 2020). It is, however, important to note that the report does not break this down into further detail.

Therefore, it does not state the attainment data for pupils with SEMH as their primary area of need. Despite this, these significant statistics highlight that the educational experiences for pupils living in poverty and for pupils identified as having SEN are considerably impacted by these vulnerabilities (Hutchinson et al, 2020).

Although Hutchinson et al (2020) focused on SEN as a broad area of need additional government statistics have highlighted more specifically the experiences of pupils who are identified as having SEMH as a primary area of need (DfE, 2019). These statistics indicate a link between this vulnerability and a pupil's eligibility for free school meals. In 2019, 14.9% of students in England were identified as having special educational needs (DfE, 2019). Within that 18.1% were identified to have SEMH as their primary area of need (DfE, 2019). When the primary areas of need were compared against a pupil's eligibility for FSM's SEMH was an area of significance with 34% of students identified as having SEMH as a primary area of need being eligible for FSM's (DfE, 2019). This is in comparison to 13% of students who receive FSM and are not identified as having any form of SEN. The data indicates a significant link between these two vulnerabilities (DfE, 2019). It is from these statistics alongside my personal experiences of working with children in these circumstances that I identified this research topic. I will now go on to discuss the origins of this research from a personal and professional interest.

Origins of the Research

I first became interested in the educational experiences of young people living in poverty whilst working as an Assistant Educational Psychologist. In this role I supported young people and their families living with high disadvantage and I observed the impact poverty had on young people's education. In addition, I observed the social and emotional impact poverty had for these young people. Following that experience, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I have had the opportunity to work in a number of educational provisions that have high percentages of pupils on role receiving FSMs. I observed in these settings that the requests for Educational Psychology support were predominantly focused around supporting students with SEMH needs. These professional experiences combined with the growing statistical data documenting the link between these two vulnerabilities led me to want to explore the topic in greater depth through my doctoral research.

Another aspect of my professional role that interested me was gaining the views of young people. I would typically elicit the voices of young people and aim to understand their views for the majority of casework I complete in placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. I have found the views of

young people to be both powerful and insightful. Therefore, whilst I was deciding on my area of research I also began exploring research that focused on eliciting the views of young people. Research has discussed the importance of hearing the voices of young people and allowing them to be included in decisions that impact their education (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). It has been argued that Educational Psychologists are well placed to elicit these views and make plans to include young people in decision making (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). My aim for this research was, therefore, to gain the views of young people and consider how educational professions can help those living in poverty and faced with SEMH difficulties to succeed in their school careers.

Theoretical Context

Having outlined my personal interests in the topic and having explored the literature that is presented in the next chapter the concepts that I feel best underpin my research are those of intersectionality and resilience. These concepts provide a way of thinking about young people's experiences of both SEMH needs and poverty and create the theoretical perspective from which I have viewed this research. I explore these concepts and how I will be using them below.

Intersectionality

The first theoretical concept that underpins my research is that of intersectionality. Originating from black feminist activism and theory, Kimberle Crenshaw is credited for proposing the term intersectionality (Tefera et al, 2018). Crenshaw (1989) argued that for individuals who are both black and female they experience challenges with racism and sexism, therefore, the intersection of these two characteristics make the experiences of these individuals different from those who experience just one. Crenshaw (1989) used the language of intersectionality to describe how two individual characteristics intersect. Since its conception there has been a range of interpretations and it is now recognised that there is huge diversity in how people characterise and understand intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). As a result there have been academic debates about what intersectionality means and how it is used within research (Davis, 2020). These debates have included discussions about the different interpretations of intersectionality by European academics to those understood by academics in the United States of America (Davis, 2020). It is thought these differences may be representative of historical and regional differences in understanding individual characteristics, however, it is argued that European academics are excluding black women from the discussion of a theory first coined to represent them (Davis, 2020). In response to these concerns it has been debated whether intersectionality should be viewed as a focus for race and feminist theory or whether it can be used as a

broader theoretical framework (Davis, 2020). With these debates in mind I am aware that there may be differences in how this concept is interpreted. I am also mindful of my own position as a white, female, European researcher and how that may have influenced my interpretation of this theory. Subsequently, for this thesis I have chosen to use Crenshaw's (1989) original definition of the concept, that intersectionality describes the overlap of two or more characteristics and this overlap creates different lived experiences for those individuals. However, unlike Crenshaw (1989) the two characteristics that I have chosen to focus on are SEMH needs and poverty. Therefore, I have considered Crenshaw's (1989) perspective alongside consideration of more recently published literature.

Hill Collins and Bilge (2016) have explored the concept of intersectionality further, arguing that it can be viewed as an approach to understanding the complexities that make up individual human experiences. Proponents of intersectionality adopt the view that the environment and individuals within it are rarely shaped by a single factor and are instead influenced by multiple factors (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Considering how the factors can work together and influence each other can also help to view and understand social inequalities (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Researchers working within an intersectionality framework attempt to consider the dynamic and complex ways individual characteristics such as race, class, gender, ability and sexuality interact and impact a person's experiences (Tefera et al, 2018). It has been argued that researchers in education need to move beyond a one-dimensional approach that considers a single characteristic and intersectionality offers a lens through which to do this (Tefera et al, 2018).

The theory outlined represents my understanding of intersectionality and it is from this theoretical perspective that I decided on my research topic. In this doctoral research the intersection of SEMH needs and poverty is explored. I have considered how young people with both of these characteristics may experience education differently from their peers who are identified as having one or neither of these vulnerabilities using the lens of intersectionality to underpin my thinking.

Resilience

Another theoretical concept I have found to be relevant and important in underpinning my research is that of resilience. Resilience can be defined as the ability to overcome challenges and succeed in the face of adversity (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). It is widely accepted by most practitioners in psychology that a person's resilience can be influenced by both nature and nurture (Bomber & Hughes (2013). Therefore, resilience is not a static characteristic and instead is viewed as something that can change depending on an individual's circumstances and environment (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). However, the concept has

received criticism because, although it can initially appear a simple approach, some academics and practitioners argue there is ambiguity and a lack of clarity that makes resilience as a concept problematic (Goldstein & Brook, 2012). Despite these critiques the concept of resilience has been growing in prominence within both psychology research and applied psychology practice (Goldstein & Brook, 2012). Using a resilience approach offers an opportunity to shift the attention away from an individual's vulnerabilities or adversities towards their strengths and capabilities (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). As a practitioner a key part of effectively working with children and young people is to help make their strengths more evident and resilience offers a lens through which to do this (Cefai & Cooper, 2008).

It has been found that some factors create a risk to young people's development and their ability to be resilient (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). In contrast, however some factors can protect young people who experience risk factors and enable them to 'succeed against the odds' (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). The DfE (2018) have published a table of factors that risk or protect young people's development of resilience in their guidance about supporting mental health in schools. Resilience as a concept is relevant to this doctoral research because poverty and experiencing SEMH needs have both been identified as factors that risk young people's development and ability to be resilient (DfE, 2018). As these two vulnerabilities are both identified as risk factors for young people it is also important to consider the protective factors that may help those who experience them to develop and thrive despite the risks (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). Research has found that school can be an environment to provide protective factors that help young people overcome adversities that they may be experiencing (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). Therefore, within this doctoral research I explore the educational experiences of young people who have these identified vulnerabilities and I also explore what has helped them to be resilient in the face of adversity and overcome these challenges. I do this by using the concept of resilience to underpin this doctoral thesis.

Thesis Overview

The rest of this thesis has been set out in the following chapters:

Chapter two presents a critical analysis of the literature. This includes three separate literature searches. I begin by analysing the literature exploring the views and experiences of young people with SEMH needs. This is followed by an exploration of the literature that has focused on hearing the views and experiences of young people living in poverty. I conclude by discussing the literature that considers these two vulnerabilities combined.

Chapter three explores the methodological approaches used within this research. To begin I outline my aims from this research and present the research questions. Next, I discuss the philosophical foundations of the research and my position as the researcher. I continue by outlining the methodological orientation and alternative methods that were considered when planning this research. The specific details of the approaches used for data collection and analysis are subsequently discussed. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the ethical considerations made throughout this research project.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data and the findings from this research with consideration of existing literature. Six themes were identified. The themes were 'positive school experiences', 'support', 'transitions', 'relationships', 'affective factors' and 'intersectionality'. These themes were discussed individually with the relevant subthemes whilst making reference to the existing literature in this area. Quotes from the interview transcripts were used to illustrate the different themes and subthemes discussed in the chapter. Subsequently, I discuss the psychological model of resilience and present the model of risk and protective factors developed from the findings of this doctoral research.

Chapter five outlines the conclusions drawn from this research. To begin I discuss how the findings from this research relate to and answer the research questions presented in Chapter Two. I also include a critical appraisal of this doctoral research by outlining the strengths and limitations. The considerations for future research in this area and implications for professional practice are then explained. The chapter concludes with my reflexive account and concluding comments.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the current literature on the experiences of young people identified with SEMH needs and those young people living in poverty. As I discussed in my introduction chapter the concepts that have framed my research are intersectionality and resilience theory. These concepts have been kept in mind and therefore have influenced how I have reviewed the literature that will be discussed in this chapter. However, systematic principles were applied to complete my literature review. To begin this chapter I explain my approach to conducting the literature review before going on to discuss the importance of hearing young people's voices in research and why this has framed the methodological approach taken. Then I go on to explore the literature of both the experiences of young people with SEMH needs and the experiences of young people living in poverty. Next, I discuss the comorbidity of these two vulnerabilities. I conclude by outlining the gaps within the literature.

Approach to Literature Search

In order to review the relevant literature relating to this research topic systematic search principles were used to search databases. The following four databases were searched using a pre-defined search strategy (Appendix A): British Education Index, Education Resource Information Centre, Child Development and Adolescent Studies and PsychINFO. Google Scholar was also used to identify further relevant literature including grey literature such as government reports and policies. Finally, additional relevant literature was identified using a 'snowballing' technique reviewing the reference lists from the already identified literature. Three separate searches were conducted using these same principles and approach. The first was focused on literature relating to the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs, the second related to the perspectives of young people living in poverty and the third focused on literature relating to the experiences of young people who were identified as having SEMH needs and living in poverty. The searches were conducted in January 2020 and repeated in June 2021. Once I had completed each literature search and identified key papers I reviewed each paper in turn. I used an excel spreadsheet to outline key features of each research article including the relevance to this thesis and possible critiques (Appendix B). The tables below outline my search terminology for each search and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Child Terminology	SEMH Terminology	Views
Child*	SEMH	Views
Young person	Social, emotional and mental health	Perspective
Young people	BESD	Voice
Student	Behavioural, emotional, social difficulties	Perceptions
Pupil	Behavioural difficulties	Experiences

Table 1: Search terminology for the search focused on the views of young people with SEMH needs

Child Terminology	Poverty Terminology	Views Terminology
Child*	Poverty	Views
Young person	Low socioeconomic	Perspective
Young people	Low income	Voice
Student	Free school meals	Perceptions
Pupil	Pupil premium	Experiences
	Disadvantage	

Table 2: Search terminology for the search focused on the views of young people living in poverty

Child Terminology	SEMH Terminology	Poverty Terminology
Child*	SEMH	Poverty
Young person	Social, emotional and mental health	Low socioeconomic
Young people	BESD	Low income
Student	Behavioural, emotional, social difficulties	Free school meals
Pupil	Behavioural difficulties	Pupil premium
		Disadvantage

Table 3: Search terminology for the search that focused on the comorbidity of both SEMH needs and poverty

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Research that explores the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs, the perspective of young people living in poverty or research that explores the experiences of young people who experience both SEMH needs and poverty. (For the final search combining SEMH and poverty this inclusion criteria was not applied due to the limited literature in this area.)	Research that did not explore the perspectives of young people and research that explores the young people’s perspectives of a specific intervention programme. (For the final search combining SEMH and poverty this exclusion criteria was not applied due to the limited literature in this area.)
Research conducted in the England (For the final search combining SEMH and poverty this inclusion criteria was changed to research conducted in the UK)	Research conducted outside the England. (For the final search combining SEMH and poverty this exclusion criteria was changed to research conducted outside the UK)
Published research from 2010 onwards.	Research published before 2010.

Table 4: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Hearing Young People’s Views in Research

I have outlined in Chapter One my personal perspectives about eliciting the voices of young people and how young people’s views have influenced my practice as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. However, researchers have also previously discussed the importance of hearing young people’s voices through research and the benefits that can come from this approach (Greene & Hogan, 2012). For young people identified as having SEMH needs or who are living in poverty the benefits are equally important. Young people with SEMH needs who have participated in research have emphasised the importance of feeling that they are being heard (Clarke et al, 2011). Clarke et al (2011) used a range of creative tools, including the use of a video diary, to help the girls in their research open up about their experiences of having SEMH needs. The participants said that they valued being listened to, as part of the research, as they often felt their views were unheard (Clarke et al, 2011). These findings are in line with the conclusions made by Michael & Frederickson (2013) who emphasised the importance of researchers hearing the views of young people with SEMH needs because they are often a population that feels they are the least heard. It has been hypothesised that young people with SEMH needs are least heard because they are not empowered and often not liked by the adults around them (Cooper, 2006).

The importance of being heard is also a theme that has been raised in Ridge's (2011) literature review exploring children's experiences of living in poverty. Ridge (2011) found that children who are living in poverty have a keen understanding about how their social economic position impacts on their daily life. As researchers, therefore, it is important to give these young people a methodologically robust approach that provides a platform for them to have their voices heard (Ridge, 2011). Due to these benefits outlined from research for young people with SEMH needs and young people living in poverty I decided to make the voices of young people central to my thesis.

There are, however, critics of research approaches that collect the views of young people who argue that it is problematic to complete meaningful research using these methods (Ridge, 2011). Therefore, throughout my research I have been mindful about practicing ethically, being reflexive and using methodologically robust approaches to provide a platform for young people to be heard in that is both meaningful and sensitive. I was aware that the sensitive nature of this research topic may have meant it was challenging for young people to share their views as they may have felt unable to discuss their family circumstances or because it may have been emotionally impactful for them to talk about their SEMH needs. In research, however, there is the opportunity to ethically consider how to support young people to share their views in a manner that is both accessible and impartial. I have outlined the ethical considerations that I have made in Chapter Three.

My decision to make young people's voices central to my thesis is reflected in the literature addressed in this chapter. I have split the empirical part of the literature review that follows into three main sections. The first section explores the literature into the voices of young people identified as having SEMH needs and the second explores the literature into the experiences of young people living in poverty. The final section of the literature review discusses the combination of these two factors.

Hearing the Views of Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Introduction

In this section I review the literature exploring the experiences of young people with SEMH needs. The literature reviewed in this section includes the perspectives of young people attending mainstream, specialist, alternative and PRU settings. After reviewing the literature I decided to use the following subheadings to discuss the findings: labelling, affective factors, relationships and education.

Labelling

The label “social, emotional and mental health” (SEMH) is a relatively recent term brought into educational practice following the publication of the SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). As this terminology remains relatively recent my literature search also included the previously used phrases “behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)” and “social, emotional and behavioural difficulties” (SEBD). Literature exploring the voices of young people with this area of need has found the label itself to be a central point of discussion (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017).

Caslin (2019) completed 13 case studies by interviewing parents, teachers and young people aged between 14-16 years old with SEMH needs. The young people interviewed were all attending either specialist or alternative provisions and had previously all been permanently excluded from mainstream education. Caslin (2019) reported that the young people interviewed appeared to believe they had failed and therefore, wanted labels to help explain why they were different from their peers. Two of the young people interviewed thought a label or diagnosis might help to reduce the stigma associated with SEMH needs (Caslin, 2019). This finding is supported by McCarthy-Singh’s (2019) research that found young people felt positively about hearing the label SEMH for the first time as they felt it helped them to understand their needs and accept that other young people have similar difficulties. However, despite these positives a concern raised by the young people in Caslin’s (2019) research was that they felt teachers picked on them in class because of their label of SEMH. An additional reflection was that many of the young people interviewed had internalised the label that had been given to them by others and saw it as part of their identity (Caslin, 2019).

Cosma and Soni (2019) also identified labels to be a point of discussion by young people with SEMH needs. They reviewed six peer reviewed journal articles as part of their systematic literature review exploring the perceptions and educational experiences of pupils with SEMH needs (Cosma & Soni, 2019). In their literature review they considered research that had used the labels SEMH, SEBD and BESD. They found that pupils had a negative perception of the labels being used to describe them. Participants also described how people around them had negative perceptions of the label (Cosma & Soni, 2019). For example, the pupils felt that those around them perceived these labels to identify a ‘within child’ need meaning the pupils were viewed as the cause of their own difficulties rather than the difficulties being caused by the systems around them. The participants discussed how these negative perceptions impacted upon how they integrated into their community making it more difficult for them to fit in (Cosma & Soni, 2019). In their research Michael and Frederickson (2013) also identified young people’s

concerns about the negative implications of being labelled. Michael and Frederickson (2013) interviewed young people aged between 12-16 years old, attending a Pupil Referral Unit who were categorised as having SEBD. In the interviews some of the pupils discussed concerns that they would be unfairly treated as a result of the label they had received. This was particularly in relation to the impact these labels may have on their ability to be employed in the future (Michael & Frederickson, 2013).

Sheffield and Morgan (2017) found that young people were not aware of the label SEMH or BESD. The researchers conducted a focus group with young people identified as having SEMH needs and found that none of the young people who participated had previously heard of the label that had been given to them. All the young people in this focus group felt negatively about the newly introduced label of SEMH and most young people were unsure about how their needs related to this label (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Young people also expressed confusion about labels in research by O'Connor et al (2011). In their published pilot study, three young people participated in a group activity and one young person also completed a semi-structured interview (O'Connor et al, 2011). O'Connor et al (2011) found that none of the young people who participated in the research had previously been aware of the label BESD despite all the young people having been identified as having BESD by their educational provision. In a focus group the young people discussed what they viewed as the fine line between being naughty and having BESD (O'Connor et al, 2011). A second focus group was also used to gain the views of teachers about the label BESD. O'Connor et al (2011) found that teachers were more able to describe what BESD is and hypothesis about possible causes of these needs than the young people themselves. This may, however, be influenced by the fact the young people had not heard of the phrase BESD prior to joining the focus group.

A critique of the literature in this area is the range of different terminology used. It may be difficult to compare the interpretations young people have of these labels as the literature being reviewed considered a variety of different terms. Therefore, the young people who participated in the research were reflecting on different labels. Additionally, these changes in terminology may have impacted upon young people's understanding of the labels, which may have been changed during the young people's educational career. Despite these challenges, however, the literature did demonstrate similar overarching themes of feelings of negativity towards the labels and potential negative impacts they may have on the young people. This indicates that despite the variation in terminology, overall, young people in research are raising concerns about being labelled in this way. However, although some young people had previously not been aware of the labels used to describe their presentation of needs research has

found that young people understand that they have additional needs and they are aware of the impact these needs can have for them (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). I will now explore this further by considering young people's views about their own behaviours as well as other affective factors.

Affective Factors

Affective factors describe the emotions, attitudes and behavioural factors that play a role in all young people's lives. Studies have found that some young people know that they have SEBD needs and understand the impact of their corresponding behaviours (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). During semi-structured interviews young people attending a PRU reported their own challenging behaviour to be the barrier that had a negative impact on their learning. One participant particularly focused on the challenges she faced managing her anger within school and the negative impact it had on her learning. In another research study students aged seven-16 attending PRUs attributed blame for their challenging behaviours to external factors and felt a sense of injustice about how their behaviours were managed by teachers (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). The students discussed feeling that they had been wronged, targeted by their peers and unfairly blamed. Frustration with teachers, relationships with parents and home events were also all identified by young people, in research interviews, as antecedents for their behaviour (Caslin, 2019). It is argued that this attribution of blame onto others demonstrates some student's sustained lack of responsibility and external locus of control (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). These findings were also supported by Cosma and Soni (2019) who concluded that many young people interviewed in research displayed a lack of awareness of the consequences of their behaviour and felt a sense of injustice in how they had been treated. Dolton, Adams and O'Reilly (2019) conducted semi-structured interviews with mainstream primary school children aged six-11 years old. Their research reached similar conclusions about children feeling a sense of injustice in school. However, additionally they found that much of the children's challenging behaviour was a response to the anxiety the children felt in school.

In contrast to the negative impacts of anxiety and young people's behavioural needs, research has also identified positive affective factors that help young people in their education. Sheffield and Morgan (2017) conducted semi-structured interviews with nine participants aged 13-16 years old. All of the participants were attending mainstream secondary schools and identified as having BESD or SEMH needs. In this research, young people were able to acknowledge their own academic and interpersonal strengths that enabled them to overcome challenges (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Additionally, the young people interviewed by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) were able to discuss their own motivators for

success and reflected on how they themselves have changed as people at significant points in their school career. For these participants their sense of becoming a different person was something they were proud to reflect on (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Similar personality qualities including personal drive, motivation to achieve their goals and perseverance were also identified, by young people, as qualities that helped them during their transition to post-16 education (O’Riordan, 2015). Furthermore, Tellis-James and Fox (2016) found that young people were able to identify the strengths and resources in themselves that helped them to overcome adversity. In their research Tellis-James and Fox (2016) interviewed eight young people aged 14-16 years old attending specialist provisions. All the participants in this research had previously been permanently excluded from a mainstream school. The young people interviewed in this research discussed a renewed sense of control and agency about their learning following their moves from mainstream settings to alternative provisions (Tellis-James & Fox, 2016). In contrast to these findings, Hart (2012) found that children did not discuss affective factors and instead these were raised when teachers were interviewed. However, this maybe because of the difference in ages between the young people interviewed. Participants in Hart’s (2012) research included primary school children as young as nine and in contrast Tellis-James and Fox (2016) and O’Riordan (2015) were interviewing young people aged 14 and above. This may have impacted the participants ability to self-reflect and comment on their own affective factors.

This section outlines both positive and negative affective factors that impact young people with SEMH need’s experiences. Within this I outlined research that found the young people interviewed attributed their behaviours and emotional responses to the actions of others (Caslin, 2019). Therefore, to understand the influence of relationships and the impact these have for young people with SEMH needs I will now go on to discuss this in further depth.

Relationships

Relationships were repeatedly identified, in the literature, as an influencing factor on young peoples educational experiences (O’Connor et al, 2011; Nind et al, 2012; Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Negative relationships with school staff were raised as being a significant risk factor for young people with SEMH needs and as previously discussed young people attributed some of the behavioural difficulties they experienced to negative relationships with members of school staff (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Dolton et al (2019) found that primary school children attending mainstream school felt that negative relationships with school staff made them feel frustrated. Additionally, Clarke et al (2011) used creative methodologies to elicit the views of girls aged 11-16, attending a specialist provision. They concluded

that teachers failure to listen to young people led to them feeling discriminated against and was linked to increased fighting in school (Clarke et al, 2011).

Hart (2012) interviewed six children attending a PRU and found that they spoke negatively about their relationships with teachers in mainstream education but positively about their relationships within the PRU. This is of particular relevance as the participant population attended a similar educational provision to the participants in this doctoral research. Findings from Nind et al (2012) also support this conclusion. Nind et al (2012) used creative methodologies to elicit the views of girls attending a specialist provision and found that when young people reflected on their experiences of mainstream school discussed school staff's negative responses due to preconceived ideas about their needs. In contrast the young people interviewed spoke positively about their relationships with staff in their specialist provision (Nind et al, 2012). The three young people who participated in research by O'Connor et al (2011) also all displayed negative attitudes towards teachers and discussed feeling that teachers did not care. The young people felt that teacher's preconceived ideas about them impacted how they were treated (O'Connor et al, 2011). All the young people who participated in this research were attending an alternative provision and therefore may have been speaking about teachers outside of mainstream education. However, it is not specified when the young people discuss negative relationships with teaching staff if they are referring to staff in mainstream or alternative provisions (O'Connor et al, 2011).

Despite the challenges that have been recognised by multiple research studies that, for young people with SEMH needs, positive relationships with teaching staff and peers can act as a protective factor (Hart, 2012, Tellis-James & Fox, 2016; Cosma & Soni, 2019). The children interviewed by Hart (2012) described the staff in their PRU as being fun, kind and fair which led them to developing positive relationships. However, these findings are not specific to PRUs. Young people attending mainstream secondary school felt that positive relationships with teachers enabled them to feel understood, supported and motivated (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Additionally, girls attending an SEMH specialist provision felt that teachers listened and tried to understand them (Nind et al, 2012). In the corresponding research study, which used the same population sample as Nind et al (2012), Clarke et al (2011) identified the importance of active listening, problem solving for the girls when they needed help and listening to student voice to develop positive relationships between young people and staff. These findings indicate the impact of positive relationships with school staff in mainstream and specialist provisions as well as PRUs.

The impact of positive relationships between young people and school staff have been linked to improvements in academic performance in school (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Positive relationships with education professionals have also been found to support a successful transition into post-16 education (O’Riordan, 2011 & 2015). Furthermore, positive relationships with teachers helped to increase young people’s sense of belonging in school which in turn led to an overall increased positivity about school (Tellis-James & Fox, 2016). These findings show the significant impact that can come from young people, attending a variety of different education provisions, having positive relationships with school staff.

As well as relationships with school staff, research has also discussed the impact of peer relationships and family relationships (Facey et al, 2021; Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Facey et al (2021) interviewed three participants aged 13-14 years old who were attending an alternative provision. The young people discussed experiencing bullying in their mainstream settings and all three participants attributed their permanent exclusions to a response following long term bullying. Facey et al (2021) also concluded that young people felt isolated from their peers due to their own difficulties with trust and fear of rejection as well as school sanctions that excluded them from their peer group. Furthermore, Sheffield and Morgan (2017) identified bullying to be a factor that negatively impacted young people’s peer relationships in mainstream education.

Relationships with peers have also been discussed as helping young people (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Young people attending an alternative provision felt peer relationships helped to make school feel safe and reduced their feelings of anxiety (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Positive implications were also identified for young people with strong family relationships as young people felt their family supported their attendance at school and without that support their attendance would be likely to drop (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Similarly, young people discussed how family were a motivating factor for them to attend school and supported them to develop a sense of belonging within their community (Tellis-James & Fox, 2016). Hart (2012) also identified that, for children with SEBD, relationships between family and school staff can act as a protective factor.

In this section I have considered positive and negative relationships for young people with SEMH needs and the implications these can have on their education. I will now go on to discuss specifically how young people with SEMH needs experience education.

Education

Whilst reviewing the literature relating to relationships I observed that some research studies indicated a difference between mainstream and alternative or specialist provisions (Nind et al, 2012). This is also observed when research considered the views of young people with SEMH needs about education as a wider topic. Young people described being oppositional, disengaged and confrontational in mainstream education (Nind et al, 2012). However, in specialist provision the nurturing ethos, school policies and alternative approaches used helped young people to feel positively about education (Nind et al, 2012). The suitability of the physical space within schools was also a recurring theme throughout the literature (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). The organisational and physical arrangements of an alternative or specialist provision have been identified as positives (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Furthermore, young people have focused on the benefits of having small classrooms (Michael & Frederickson, 2013) and having break out spaces available to use when they need to feel calm (Nind et al, 2012).

As well as the physical arrangements of a school, in their literature review Cosma and Soni (2019) discussed the academic difficulties pupils with SEMH needs raised concerns about when discussing their experiences of mainstream education. The literature indicated that when pupils with SEMH needs reflected on their experiences of mainstream education, they felt the academic expectations were too high (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Additionally, pupils felt that the amount of additional support provided for them in mainstream education was not sufficient (Cosma & Soni, 2019). For young people attending a mainstream setting there was also a perceived stigma attached to receiving additional support in classes that increased young people's feelings of being different from their peers (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017).

Jalali and Morgan (2017) interviewed students aged between seven and 16 years old attending Pupil Referral Units about their experiences. A lot of research in this area focuses on exploring the perceptions of secondary aged students; therefore the wider age range in Jalali and Morgan's (2017) research is of note. The students in this research described the space and calmness within the building, the personalised curricula and increased adult support as supportive factors in their educational provision (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). In her research Hart (2012) also interviewed children of ages spanning both primary and secondary schools with participants aged nine to 12 years old who were attending a PRU. She found, similarly to Jalali and Morgan (2017) that children identified having a differentiated and individualised curriculum as an important factor for enabling academic success (Hart, 2012). In support of this, research has also found that not having an appropriately differentiated curriculum can act as a barrier to young people's success (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). In contrast, the young people

interviewed described the benefits of having individualised curricula that includes extra curricular activities, is relevant to their chosen careers and involves learning tasks personalised to meet their individual learning needs (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Tellis-James and Fox (2016) also concluded that learning opportunities within the curricula should be relevant to the young people's future to help them access positive learning experiences. It is interesting to note, looking at this collection of papers that the topic of a differentiated curricula was raised most frequently with young people attending a PRU (Jalali & Morgan, 2017; Hart, 2012; Michael & Frederickson, 2013). It perhaps indicates that an appropriately differentiated curriculum is of particular importance to young people who attend PRUs. This is relevant for this doctoral research as the participants were also all attending a PRU.

How schools approach and manage behaviour is another topic that young people have discussed in research (Hart, 2012). In research by Hart (2012) children felt behaviour was managed best when teaching staff used a consistent approach and had high expectations for all. However, young people have also discussed the use of sanctions within education (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that the effective use of sanctions was a positive factor identified by young people to support them in their education. Despite this, young people have identified some sanctions, such as detention, as inconsequential and external exclusion was considered detrimental for some students due to missed learning (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). These sanctions led some young people to develop a sense of injustice (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). This is supported by Facey et al's (2021) research, which concluded that sanctions that excluded young people from their peers left them feeling isolated. Additionally, Caslin's (2021) research, which focused specifically on young people's experiences of exclusion, found that permanent exclusions left young people feeling blamed and rejected.

As well as transitions following permanent exclusions, research has also considered the transition from primary to secondary school for young people with SEMH needs (Bagnall et al, 2021). O'Connor et al (2011) interviewed one young person using a life grid approach to support the semi-structured interview. On a life grid the young person marked the beginning of secondary school as the point that they began to disengage from education. In contrast, primary school was identified as being enjoyable (O'Connor et al, 2011). Research that was specifically exploring the transition from primary to secondary school for children attending a specialist provision found that the transition created conflicting emotions with both nerves and excitement (Bagnall et al, 2021). Additionally, the children wanted to be involved in decision-making but were not always fully informed about the process (Bagnall et al, 2021).

Another aspect of education that has been considered by research is belongingness in school (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Research has found that young people with SEMH needs develop a sense of belonging in mainstream primary school but do not discuss similar feelings about secondary school (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Girls attending a specialist provision emphasised the importance of feeling they belong within their school setting (Nind et al, 2012). For some young people having a sense of belonging in school has been achieved in alternative provisions rather than their mainstream settings (O'Connor et al, 2011).

Summary of the Views of Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

In summary, research has found a number of themes that young people with SEMH needs highlight as important and impactful for them. Labelling, affective factors, relationships and education are all discussed by young people as factors that influence their experiences. I will now go on to comment on and critique the literature exploring the perceptions and experiences of young people living in poverty.

Hearing the Views of Young People Living in Poverty

Introduction

This part of the chapter reviews the literature on the experiences of young people living in poverty. The literature included within this section comprises of qualitative and large survey studies. I presented this literature under the following thematic headings: relationships, affective factors, education and home and community.

Relationships

Children identified as having low socio-economic status (SES) have described the impact relationships with teachers, peers and their family can have on their experiences (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013). Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013) completed 50 in depth case studies made up of interviews with parents, children and teachers. All the children interviewed for this study were attending secondary school. The research found that positive relationships with parents, teachers and peers all helped young people from low SES to “succeed against the odds” and attain highly in school. Similarly, O'Sullivan et al, (2019) found that having positive peer role models and support from their families helped the students to succeed in their goal of attending an elite university. The 20 students who participated in focus groups for this research also discussed the positive impact they felt having good relationships with academic and teaching staff had on their education (O'Sullivan et al, 2019). The research concluded that having the combination of strong peer, family and teacher relationships was important in supporting students to succeed in higher education (O'Sullivan et al, 2019).

To explore this in more depth I will begin by considering what the literature reports about young people's relationships with teachers. Thiele et al (2016) interviewed six students aged 18-20 years old who were attending a prestigious university. The majority of the students identified teacher's support as being influential in their decision to attend higher education. Similarly, Slack (2014) interviewed nine young people from low SES, aged 19-22. In contrast to Thiele et al (2016) the young people interviewed by Slack (2014) were attending higher education, completing apprentices or working fulltime. Slack (2014) concluded that the young people who went on to attend higher education described positive relationships with teachers from school whereas young people who chose to complete apprenticeships described being ignored by teachers in favour of their more academically able peers. It is of note that several qualitative research studies exploring the views of children living in poverty use small sample sizes making the findings difficult to generalise (Thiele et al, 2016; Slack, 2014). However, Shackleton et al (2018) completed a large-scale survey of over 6000 pupils aged 11-12 years old. In this survey relationships with teachers did not differ between pupils from low SES and pupils from more affluent families. This raises the question of whether a pupils SES impacts relationships with teachers or if for the young people interviewed by Slack (2014) other contributing factors were influential. Due to the different methodologies, sample sizes and age groups used in these two research studies, however, comparisons should be drawn with caution.

Ridge (2011) also found that some children felt teachers displayed discriminatory attitudes towards them. Ridge (2011) linked these children's experiences to the poor relationships they described between themselves and their teachers. Ridge (2011) reached these conclusions following a review of qualitative literature. This, however, was not a systematic review meaning some research may have not been included. Despite this, the large breadth of research included by Ridge (2011) made this review important to include in my own literature review whilst also considering other more recently published literature.

As well as identifying the influence of teacher relationships, Slack (2014) found young people also spoke about the influence of their peer group. The research found that young people's friendship groups were influential in the paths they chose after compulsory education. This meant the young people who were friends with academically focused young people were more inclined to follow a similar academically focused path (Slack, 2014). It is perhaps important to note however, that this correlation between friendship groups and life choices after education may also be present for young people who are growing up within a higher socioeconomic background. The researchers did not compare their findings

to the experiences of young people who were not from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Other research has found that friendship groups can act as a protective factor for children from low SES (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013). Therefore, it may be that for those young people, interviewed by Slack (2014), in academically focused friendship groups, their peers similarly acted as a protective factor. The research by Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013) was completed with a different age group of young people, however, making it difficult to draw direct comparisons.

Research has also found that some peer relationships have been described to have negative implications for children living in poverty (Ridge, 2011). Following a literature review Ridge (2011) concluded that children felt anxious about feeling different, being bullied or feeling isolated. These findings are supported by research from Theile et al (2016) in which university students discussed feeling stigmatised, bullied and isolated by their peer group in school as a result of growing up 'working class'. These findings are drawn from studies with varied age groups and sample sizes indicating that challenges within peer relationships may be present for young people from poverty throughout their educational careers.

The final relationships considered in this literature review are young people's relationships with their family. O'Sullivan et al (2019) conducted focus groups with 20 students from disadvantaged backgrounds that had been accepted onto a foundation course at the University of Oxford. All the students interviewed discussed the important role they felt their family had in helping them and encouraging them to attend a prestigious university. Some students also discussed wanting to be a role model for younger family members and this motivated them to succeed (O'Sullivan et al, 2019). Although not directly linked to family relationships parental attitudes towards education and particularly higher education has also been identified to positively influence young people's decision making to pursue higher education (O'Sullivan et al, 2019; Slack, 2014). In contrast, Theile et al (2017) found that students attending a prestigious university, who were from disadvantaged families, discussed parents discouraging further education referencing concerns with the cost and the students not "fitting in". However, despite parental concerns these students went on to attend higher education. This indicates that although parental attitudes can be influential, for students their own attitudes and affective factors also determine their decisions and experiences. I will now go on to explore the impact of affective factors in more depth.

Affective Factors

The affective factors discussed under this subheading include young people's attitudes and aspirations as well as the emotional ramifications of living in poverty. Similar to the findings about the influence of parental attitudes it appears that young people's attitudes towards education impact their decision-making (Slack, 2014). Slack (2014) found that young people who attended higher education and were also from low socioeconomic backgrounds had a more positive attitude about education than young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds who chose to start apprenticeships. These different attitudes appear to be linked to the paths young people decided to take after leaving compulsory education (Slack, 2014). Affective factors were also identified and discussed by Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013). In their research, Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013) identified children's cognitive abilities, self-regulation, resilience, problem-solving strategies, motivation and goal orientation as qualities that helped children succeed 'against the odds'.

Frostick et al (2015) conducted a survey of 1214 adolescents aged 11-16 years old to explore future aspirations. The researchers concluded that young people from low SES maintained high aspirations despite their SES. However, Frostick et al (2015) did find that young people living in high deprivation were significantly less likely to aspire to go to university. It is, however, important to note that the authors identified a range of variables which included peer relationships, conduct at school, parental support and emotional wellbeing which also impacted young people's aspirations. Therefore, it is difficult to confidently conclude from this research alone that the significant difference between young people's aspirations to attend university is solely due to their experiences of poverty. Moogan (2011) also investigated post-16 aspirations and perceptions of university using a case study approach and interviewed a cohort of Year 11 students (aged 15 or 16 years old) within a secondary school. She found that Year 11 students in receipt of FSM's had a limited knowledge about university and they considered it a financial risk. The student's limited knowledge about university, particularly their understanding about the costs involved, impacted upon their aspirations to attend university when they left school (Moogan, 2011). The findings from both these studies that have used large data samples of similar aged young people indicate that overall young people living in poverty may be less likely to aspire to attend university.

High aspirations were evident in the cohort of students interviewed by O'Sullivan et al (2019) who were attending the University of Oxford. O'Sullivan et al (2019) found that the students interviewed talked about the agency, autonomy and ownership they needed, to overcome the limitations they felt existed

within the education system and the barriers they faced to reach an elite university (O'Sullivan et al, 2019). Similar to O'Sullivan et al (2019), Thiele et al (2017) interviewed students attending a prestigious university. The students described being frustrated with barriers they face, and the low expectations others held for them (Thiele et al, 2017). However, they also had a strong motivation to prove others wrong and succeed (Thiele et al, 2017). These studies demonstrate the impact individual perspectives can have on young people living in poverty's experiences and significantly on their choices following compulsory education (O'Sullivan et al, 2019; Thiele et al, 2017).

As well as the affective factors already discussed I will now go on to discuss the emotional ramifications for young people living in poverty. One participant interviewed by Knight et al (2018) discussed the guilt they felt if their mum did not eat in order to provide enough food for the children. Knight et al (2018) discussed how these experiences created negative emotional ramifications for this young person as a direct result of the family facing economic difficulties. Ridge (2017) also discussed the emotional ramifications children experienced from their family's economic difficulties. In her research with children from single parent household, children revealed experiencing anxiety about whether their family would have the financial resources to be able to meet their needs (Ridge, 2017). This supports the findings from Ridge's (2011) literature review that concluded many children growing up in poverty feel sad, anxious and frustrated about their family's financial situation. Building on this, research has also found, through child and parent self-reported questionnaires, that economic pressure in the home is reported to have a direct impact on feelings of distress for children (Chzhen et al, 2021).

Whilst considering the affective factors that impact young people living in poverty I have discussed their attitudes, aspirations, motivations and emotional needs. Many of these directly impact young people's experiences of education and therefore I will now go on to discuss the educational experiences of young people living in poverty.

Education

Research has indicated that children living in poverty face a number of challenges in their education (Ridge, 2011). Ridge (2011) found that children have reported facing challenges in school because they could not afford the resources required, for example, books, uniform and revision guides. Her review also found that children spoke of feeling anxious, uncertain and that things were unfair at school because of the financial difficulties they faced (Ridge, 2011). In more recent research Ridge (2017) drew findings from data gathered as part of a longitudinal research study investigating family life for single parent families living in poverty. Part of this study included in depth interviews with children from

families living in poverty. Findings from these interviews highlighted that children felt the need to balance their school, home and social lives with their perceptions of family finances (Ridge, 2017). This resulted in some children not asking parents for money they may need for school activities, such as, school trips (Ridge, 2017). Knight et al (2018) also identified implications for young people's education of living in poverty. Their research study was based on three case studies following interviews with young people aged between 11-15 years who experienced food poverty and their parents or carers. In these interviews young people discussed feeling hungry and exhausted in school because their families were regularly going without meals due to financial pressures.

As well as the financial implications of 'missing out', research by Shackleton et al (2018), in which over 6000 pupils ages 11 and 12 years old were asked to complete surveys, explored how pupils viewed their educational experiences. The researchers found that students from low SES reported a lower sense of belonging and lower commitment to their academic studies. Thiele et al (2017) also discussed difficulties in education for students from low SES. Students aged 18-20, who had previously received FSM in school and were now attending a prestigious university were interviewed for the research (Thiele et al, 2017). The students discussed how they felt that in school they had to fight to participate in challenging subjects because teachers had low expectations of them. The majority of participants in this research also discussed difficulties they faced with attendance, indicating that there were various reasons including family members' health, students' own mental health and social difficulties, that impacted on their ability to attend school regularly (Thiele et al, 2017).

Although studies have outlined the difficulties young people living in poverty have experienced in education, some studies have also explored student's perceptions of how these challenges can be overcome (O'Sullivan et al, 2019). Students from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage who were attending the University of Oxford were interviewed about what supported their transition to higher education and what they felt should be done to support students (O'Sullivan et al, 2019).

Although students spoke about feeling frustrated by school systems and inequalities between private and state education they also discussed positives from their education. Students emphasised the important role schools play in offering advice and support about university applications. They also commented on their school's role in completing references for the students as part of their university application. Moreover, Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013) explored the risk and resilience factors for children living in poverty who 'succeeded against the odds'. Children discussed feeling that their GCSE's were a motivating factor for them and felt the positive impact of receiving academic and emotional wellbeing

support, extra curricula activities and practical learning opportunities helped them to succeed at school (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013).

In this section I have considered the educational experiences for young people living in poverty and the impact poverty has on these experiences. To understand how poverty impacts the experiences of young people in all areas of their life the final topic I will discuss relates to home and the community.

Home and Community

There are numerous difficulties in the home that young people living in poverty have discussed in research (Ridge, 2011; Knight et al, 2018). Children living in poverty often experience high levels of tension in the home relating to the financial difficulties the family faces (Ridge, 2011). Some children may also experience increased demands placed on them at home as poverty can be related to parental illness or disability that may mean they are required to take on young carer roles (Ridge, 2011). Ridge's (2011) literature review also discussed difficulties children faced with inadequate or unstable housing and on occasions the potential risk of homelessness. Children reflected on the challenges that came with this including potentially having to move away from their friends or feeling reluctant to invite friends to their house. Research by Thiele et al (2017) found that for some students their difficult home circumstances became their motivation to achieve and go on to higher education. Several students discussed seeing education and, in particular higher education, as a route to leaving behind and overcoming the economic difficulties they faced at home (Thiele et al, 2017).

Furthermore, financial difficulties in the home impacted children's access to activities within the community and with their peer group (Knight et al, 2018). Knight et al (2018) conducted interviews with three young people aged 11-15 that focused on young people's experiences of food poverty. All the young people interviewed in the research discussed going without food at home and how this experience had impacted on their social and emotional wellbeing. The young people described missing out on social experiences within their community such as eating out with their friends due to their family's financial circumstances (Knight et al, 2018). These findings were also proffered by Ridge (2011) who found that children were unable to join clubs because they could not afford the fees nor were able to buy the necessary equipment. Some children growing up in poverty attempted to balance their school and social lives with their perceptions of family finances, however, felt they often got left out of social situations because they could not afford to participate (Ridge, 2017). Similarly, Thiele et al (2017) conducted interviews with students who had grown up living in disadvantaged backgrounds and went on to attend elite universities. In the research students reflected that they had been aware of the impact

of their family's financial difficulties and that they had to miss out. The students, for example, discussed the difficulties they felt they experienced at school because of not having the money to buy the latest clothes or phone (Thiele et al, 2017). They also discussed feeling that they had to conceal their family's financial situation (Thiele et al, 2017).

As well as the difficulties they experienced at home or as a result of circumstances in the home children living in poverty have discussed the impact of their community on their feelings of freedom and safety (Ridge, 2011). Some children have discussed the difficulties of living within deprived neighbourhoods and feeling unsafe where they lived as well as the difficulties they had accessing public services without transport or financial resources which limited their access to the community (Ridge, 2011). However, the students interviewed by O'Sullivan et al (2019) discussed the positive impact they felt their community had on supporting them to get into higher education. When considering this research however, I am mindful that O'Sullivan et al (2019) interviewed students attending the University of Oxford. These students had succeeded in their goal and were attending an elite university. It therefore may be that these students experienced a greater number of positive factors that supported them in achieving their goal.

Summary of the Views of Young People Living in Poverty

In summary, the papers reviewed have identified a number of themes that young people living in poverty highlight as important and impactful for them. Relationships, affective factors, education and home and community were all themes that appeared throughout the literature. Having reviewed the literature that explores the views of young people with SEMH needs and young people living in poverty, I will now go on to critique the literature that explores the experiences of young people identified as having SEMH needs and living in poverty.

Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Poverty

Introduction

This part of the chapter reviews the literature that considers the experiences of young people who are identified as having both SEMH needs and living in poverty. As there is a limited amount of existing literature combining these two vulnerabilities this section does not focus specifically on the views of young people and includes some grey literature. Literature is presented under the following thematic headings: links between SEMH needs and poverty and educational experiences of young people with SEMH needs living in poverty.

Links Between Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Poverty

The link between SEMH and poverty has been identified in several large-scale quantitative research studies (Piotrowska et al, 2015; Shaw et al, 2016; Ashworth & Humphrey, 2020). Secondary analysis of a large-scale quantitative data sample of 7977 children aged between five and 17 identified a link between antisocial behaviours and low SES. The correlation between these two factors was consistent for children who displayed antisocial behaviours such as aggression and children with a diagnosis relating to behavioural needs such as Oppositional Defiance Disorder (Piotrowska et al, 2015). Similarly, a report commissioned by the Joseph Roundtree Foundation that included a literature review and interviews with professionals also identified a link between poverty and special educational needs (Shaw et al, 2016). Shaw et al (2016) investigated this correlation for children with a range of different special educational needs, however, when looking specifically at behavioural and emotional needs they found that over half the children identified in this category were also classified as living within poverty. Ashworth and Humphrey (2020) also completed a secondary analysis of quantitative data for 3083 children ages six and seven years old. In their analysis entitlement to free school meals was one of six factors that correlated with behavioural difficulties in school (Ashworth & Humphrey, 2020). These research studies all appear to identify a link between SEMH and poverty (Piotrowska et al, 2015; Shaw et al, 2016; Ashworth & Humphrey, 2020).

Hartas (2011) analysed longitudinal data collected from the Millennium Cohort Study, which included over 15000 participants and found that children from low-income families experienced a greater level of behavioural needs at home and at school. However, Hartas' (2011) also found that factors such as positive parenting, parental sensitivity and the home learning environment were identified to be protective factors for children and with these in place children were able to succeed in education despite facing economic difficulties within the home (Hartas, 2011). This research indicates, therefore, that it is perhaps the combination of risk or protective factors associated with families living in poverty that either cause or reduce the likelihood of a correlation between SEMH needs and poverty (Hartas, 2011).

Cottis (2019) conducted research using a case study approach and focused on the experiences of three children aged between nine and 11 years old. This is the only research article I found in my search that combined SEMH and poverty and used a qualitative approach making it of particular relevance for this thesis. Although this methodological approach limited the researcher to exploring the views of only three children it is more closely aligned to the approach used in the majority of literature reviewed in

this chapter. Consistent with other researchers, Cottis (2019) identified a link between SEMH needs and children living in poverty. Cottis (2019) reflected that the children in the case studies difficulties appeared to be exacerbated by their socio-economic circumstances. Additionally, Cottis (2019) discussed the impact this had on the children's academic performance and for one participant the risk of permanent exclusion. To consider this finding further, I will now go on to explore the potential impact this identified correlation can have on young people's experiences in education.

Educational Experiences of Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs Living in Poverty

Shaw et al (2016) highlighted that children with SEN who were living in poverty were significantly more likely than their peers to become young offenders or not in post-16 education, employment or training (Shaw, 2016). They are also more likely than their peers to perform lower academically, have emotional wellbeing difficulties and higher rates of school exclusion (Shaw et al, 2016). The research focused on the general definition of SEN rather than specifically focusing on SEMH needs. Despite this, the researchers raised significant points relevant to this thesis and as research in this area is limited it was included in this literature review.

Malcolm (2018) raised concerns about the overrepresentation of children with SEN or children in receipt of free school meals being permanently excluded or taught in alternative provisions. To reach these conclusions Malcolm (2018) completed analysis of pre-existing government data. The findings led him to raise the question of equality in education and what more schools can do to be inclusive of these children. Although Malcolm (2018) did not consider these two vulnerabilities combined the research is relevant for this doctoral thesis due to the participant sample. Malcolm (2018) was exploring permanent exclusions and alternative provisions (including PRUs) and as all the young people who participated in this doctoral research had experienced at least one permanent exclusion and at the time of the interviews were being taught in a PRU the findings of Malcolm's (2018) study relate to a similar participant group. The research findings from Malcolm (2018) are also supported by the findings from Paget et al (2018). Paget et al's (2018) research was based on data from a birth cohort study in which 53 children were excluded from mainstream education by age eight and 390 were excluded by age 16. From this data Paget et al (2018) identified SEMH difficulties and poverty to be significant factors associated with school exclusion. Furthermore, Paget et al (2018) found that school exclusions were most likely to occur for children who experienced multiple vulnerabilities which are a culmination of individual, family and school factors. Factors identified as increasing a child's risk of exclusion from

school included childhood mental health difficulties and being from a family of low SES (Paget et al, 2018).

Summary of Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Poverty Literature

Overall, although research in this area is limited the existing literature indicates a link between SEMH and poverty. Furthermore, literature appears to highlight that these factors can also impact on young people's educational experiences. During my literature review I did not identify any positive outcomes for young people who experience both vulnerabilities. This may be due to the limited pool of research available and the bias of the research conducted. However, it does appear to indicate that young people with SEMH needs who are living in poverty have a greater amount of challenge, particularly in relation to their education than their peers. Future research exploring, not only the challenges but also the positives these young people experience would help to further increase researchers' understanding in this area.

Chapter Summary

Throughout this literature review I have considered the available literature exploring the views of young people identified as having SEMH needs and the views of young people living in poverty. I have also explored the literature that discusses the intersection of these two vulnerabilities. Despite the documented correlation between these two vulnerabilities (Piotrowska et al, 2015), I have been unable, in my literature search, to find any literature that specifically explores the views of young people who are identified as experiencing SEMH needs and living in poverty.

Furthermore, it is apparent that young people with SEMH needs have discussed their views about education as have young people living in poverty (Cosma & Soni, 2019; Ridge, 2011). Literature exploring the intersection of these vulnerabilities foregrounds the difficulties children face particularly with the increased risk of experiencing school exclusions (Shaw et al, 2016). However, there is a gap in the literature in understanding how young people with SEMH needs living in poverty experience education. Finally, when considering the intersection of SEMH needs and poverty I have been unable to find any literature that identifies positive experiences for young people. Therefore, my research, aims to address these gaps in the literature and explore the educational experiences of young people with SEMH needs living in poverty. As already outlined I aim to do this by underpinning my research with the theoretical concepts of intersectionality and resilience. I aim to adopt a resilience model approach to explore with young people both the risk and protective factors that they experience in education in relation to their

SEMH needs and experiences of poverty. By taking this approach I hope to uncover both the challenges and positive experiences these young people face.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion about the evolution of the research aims and questions. The methodological foundations of this research will then be discussed. This will focus on my philosophical assumptions and position as a researcher as well as the theoretical basis for my methodology. Next, I outline a practical account of the research including sampling, method and procedure. I then go on to discuss my approach to data analysis, thematic analysis, with a balanced appreciation for this method. Finally, I end by discussing my ethical considerations in relation to this research.

Research Aims and Questions

The research aims for my thesis have evolved during the process of my literature review. Initially my focus was on the experiences of any young people with special educational needs growing up in poverty. However, as I began my initial literature searches I became aware of how broad this area was and I felt it needed to be refined in order for my research to have a clear focus. As outlined in Chapter One, during my placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist I had observed that educational provisions in areas of high deprivation were predominantly requesting support from the Educational Psychology Service for young people with SEMH needs. Additionally, during my initial grey literature search I became aware of the statistical link between young people who are living in poverty and also have SEMH needs. As I continued to complete a literature search it became apparent that although research acknowledges the significant link between young people with special educational needs and young people living in poverty there appears to be an increased significance for young people with SEMH needs living in poverty. Literature also outlines the impact these factors have on young people's educational experiences. These reasons led me to adapt my research questions to focus specifically on the educational experiences of young people living in poverty who also have SEMH needs.

The overall aims for the study are:

To understand the educational experiences of young people who have been identified as having SEMH needs and who are living in poverty. As well as to understand if there are approaches that help or hinder these young people in school.

The research questions that have been developed to address these aims are:

1. How do young people with SEMH needs who are also living in poverty and attending a PRU experience school?
2. What do these young people feel helps or hinders them in school?

Philosophical Foundations

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The paradigm of qualitative research allows the experiences, perceptions and views of participants to be heard (Willig, 2013). The aim is to gather an in depth understanding and record of a participants experiences or words (Willig, 2013). Primarily the data collected in qualitative research takes the form of spoken or written words, or visual representations (Denscombe, 2014). Qualitative research also aims to gain understanding and meaning by investigating the individual experiences and perspectives of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This contrasts to quantitative research that typically focuses on numerical data (Denscombe, 2014) and involves collecting data to test a hypothesis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, as the research questions for this doctoral research are attempting to establish meaning by exploring the perceptions of young people a qualitative research paradigm rather than a quantitative approach is best suited.

I have already outlined above that qualitative research stems from research questions that aim to explore the individual experiences, perceptions and views of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, in qualitative research the researcher may focus on exploring questions more generally rather than seeking to find specific information (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The researchers own values, beliefs and identity are also considered to be integral to the production of data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The methods in qualitative research may also need to be flexible and open ended to account for unexpected or new information that participants may explore (Willig, 2013). The data collected in qualitative research must be naturalistic and not reduced in any way until the analysis process (Willig, 2013). This is because qualitative research aims to provide a comprehensive record of the participant's views, experiences and perceptions (Willig, 2013). This focus in qualitative research, however, makes it difficult to generalise to wider populations and instead represents the in depth views and perspectives of the participants (Denscombe, 2014). Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that there are four philosophical assumptions that shape qualitative research approaches. These assumptions are ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. I will now go on to discuss each of these in greater depth.

Ontology

Ontology refers to the nature of the world, the structures that are part of everyday reality and what it means to live in that world (Oliver, 2014). In this section I outline three ontological positions. These are objectivism, constructivism and realism. I have chosen to focus on these three positions because Matthews and Ross (2010) have argued that these are the three main ontological positions within research. Objectivism states the social phenomena, that make up our social world, have an existence of their own that is separate from any humans involved (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, objectivism asserts that knowledge is objective, verifiable and can be replicated (Oliver, 2014). In contrast, constructivism states that the social phenomenon, which makes up our social world, are individually constructed and reworked by humans response to social interaction and reflection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, research is impacted by the researchers own constructs, meanings and understanding of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thirdly, realism states that there is a reality separate from that in which humans function within and that which can be experienced through the senses (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Realism also considers there to be an additional dimension that is hidden from the social actors that cannot be experienced through the senses or directly observed but that impacts the social reality (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

There is an ongoing debate about the differing philosophical positions researchers bring to research however; their perspectives are often based on individual experiences and chosen research discipline (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A researcher's ontological position holds significance as it underpins the epistemological basis of research (Oliver, 2014). I align with a constructivist ontological position for this research. I view reality as a construct individually understood by each social actor that is based upon social interaction and reflection. In line with this ontological position I also reject the idea that reality is something observable or measurable.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the concept of how we develop and understand knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Similar to ontology there are different terms to describe the varying viewpoints researchers can hold (Cohen et al, 2018). However, for this thesis three epistemological positions will be discussed: positivism, interpretivism and realism. Positivism is an approach traditionally taken by natural scientists as it takes the perspective that there is a social reality that can be investigated and observed independently from the researcher (Denscombe, 2014). Researchers that take a positivist approach use data, evidence and rationale to shape knowledge, this is typically done using quantitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach is developed from the ontological position of objectivism. A

second epistemological position is interpretivism, which views knowledge as something created and negotiated between people and their experiences (Oliver, 2014). This approach has developed from the ontological position of constructivism and data is typically gathered by methods that seek to discover the perceptions and understandings of participants (Denscombe, 2014). Finally, realism takes the approach, similar to positivism, that there is a reality separate to the researcher that can be investigated however realism extends this further by suggesting social reality is underpinned by mechanisms that cannot be seen (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This is similar to the ontological perspective of realism (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Researchers who take a realism approach may collect either qualitative or quantitative data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Interpretivism defines my epistemological position because I aim to understand the individual perceptions and views of the participants. This aligns with my professional values in my work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. In my role I prioritise and value hearing the views of the young people, families and schools I work with.

Axiology

Axiology is the terminology used to describe the values and principles that we hold (Cohen et al, 2018). In research this concept moves beyond simply considering the technical issues of research to being concerned with understanding the world and how understandings of the world are informed by individual views (Cohen et al, 2018). Researchers must be mindful of the impact therefore that their own views may have on their research (Cohen et al, 2018). An approach that researchers can take to acknowledge the impact of their own influences is reflexivity (Willig, 2013). Reflexivity is important in qualitative research as it encourages the researcher to not only reflect on their biases within the research but also to consider that their reactions can make certain insights and understandings possible (Willig, 2013). For example, my experience working in schools with young people who have experienced poverty and SEMH needs and the empathy I felt for these young people led to my choice of topic.

Before beginning this project, I acknowledged that I held core beliefs about the experiences of young people growing up in poverty who have SEMH needs. For example, I believed that accessing education and making academic progress may be challenging for them. I also believed that there are varying levels of support that schools could offer which could help these young people achieve. In line with my constructivist belief that individuals have their own constructs of the world based on their experiences within it, I also believe that my own constructs impacted my analysis and interpretation of the data. In order to address this bias, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) structured approach to conducting

thematic analysis, reviewed my themes with my supervisor and reflected on my experiences as a researcher using a researcher diary (Appendix C).

Research Paradigm

Alternative Approaches Considered

In this section I discuss the alternative approaches that I considered and how I reached my decision to use qualitative methodology utilising creative methods to facilitate semi-structured interviews. In my research I wanted to use a methodology that would enable me to elicit the views of young people. Therefore approaches I considered were Narrative Inquiry and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Narrative Orientated Inquiry is a methodological approach outlined by Hiles et al (2008). The approach is underpinned by the assumptions that narratives dominate human discourse and through narratives we can understand an individual's perspective and interpretation of events (Hiles et al, 2008). This methodological approach enables participants to share their narratives with the researcher through the use of narrative interviews (Hiles et al, 2008). Although this methodology is focused on sharing the views and perspectives of the participants, once I had refined my research questions it was apparent that they would not fit with this methodology as I was seeking to answer specific questions about young people's educational experiences and what helped and hindered them in school. Therefore, my research questions did not lend themselves to the more open narrative approach. Furthermore, whilst reviewing the literature for this thesis, I noted that I had not seen a researcher use a narrative approach when collecting the views of young people with SEMH needs. When I was deciding on my methodological approach due to the sensitive nature of the topic and additional needs of the participants I was mindful of the ethical implications of my research. I decided to reduce ethical tensions it would be most appropriate to use an approach that previous researchers have found to be effective at gaining the views of young people with SEMH needs. Whilst reviewing the literature I had not seen a researcher use a narrative approach when collecting the views of young people with SEMH needs and therefore decided this would not be the most appropriate methodology for my research.

Another alternative approach I considered was IPA. Phenomenological research, including IPA, is underpinned by a constructivist ontological position fitting with my own philosophical assumptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Advocates of the approach are interested in exploring the lived experiences of participants through the exploration of patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This methodological approach also does fit with my first research question that explores the

educational experiences of young people attending a PRU, with SEMH needs who are living in poverty. However, IPA as an approach is focused on individual experiences and does not align with research questions that focus on something other than personal experience (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Therefore, IPA is not the best approach to answer my second research question that focused on understanding what young people felt helped or hindered them in school in addition to their experiences. Furthermore, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist it was my hope that my research would provide clear implications for practice and outcomes that educational professionals could use in practice. As IPA is focused on individual experience rather than considering the breadth of experiences from multiple participants it is harder to draw actionable outcomes from the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2020). For these reasons I decided that IPA would not be the most suitable methodology for this doctoral research. After reviewing and deciding against these approaches I instead moved to consider a more general qualitative approach utilising creative methods to support semi-structured interviews. I will now explain my reasons for this decision.

Methodological Orientation

A qualitative approach was chosen for this research as I felt it was the most appropriate methodological orientation given my philosophical commitments as outlined, to investigate and answer my research questions. Researchers using a qualitative approach seek to establish meaning from understanding the views of participants using open ended and exploratory approaches to conducting research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within qualitative research a variety of different approaches to data collection can be used (Denscombe, 2014). These include surveys, focus groups and semi-structured interviews (Matthews & Ross, 2010). To identify which approach was most suitable to answer my research questions I considered the strengths and limitations of these different approaches.

Surveys

Advantages of using surveys for this research were that they can be used to gain the views of a large number of participants and there is consistency in how the questions are delivered to the participants (Denscombe, 2014). However, surveys are most effective when the information being gathered is brief and there is a risk of desirability bias when participants are being asked questions on sensitive topics (Denscombe, 2014). Furthermore, researchers must consider the accessibility of a questionnaire for those participating (Denscombe, 2014). As the participants for this research had been identified by their schools as having SEN and the topics being discussed were of a sensitive nature, I decided that the disadvantages of a survey outweighed the advantages and concluded that it was not the most appropriate methodology to answer my research questions.

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide a method for collecting rich qualitative data that draws on group dynamics and participants overlapping or differing opinions (Morgan, 1997). However, a challenge when running focus groups in research is how to provide confidentiality around sensitive topics within a group environment (Morgan, 1997). To achieve my research aims I had to ask participants about sensitive topics and was aware that potentially confidential information may be discussed. Therefore, to remain ethical in my research approach and to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants I decided focus groups would not be a suitable method of data collection.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Finally, semi-structured interviews can be used to explore a participant's experiences in new and different ways, which can lead to the generation of new knowledge for the participant and the researcher (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews can be used to explore complex issues, feelings and experiences (Denscombe, 2014). As my research aims to explore the experiences of young people it was decided that this would be the most appropriate methodological orientation to choose in line with my ontological and epistemological assumptions. Despite this benefit of semi-structured interviews, I was also aware of the ethical need to ensure the young people participating felt comfortable to discuss sensitive topics whilst also being mindful of their developmental capabilities to convey experiences and feelings in words (Greene & Hogan, 2012). It is because of this ethical consideration that I decided to consider using creative methods alongside my semi-structured interviews to provide alternative ways for the young people to communicate difficult experiences (Stirling, 2015). The creative methods were, however, used to prompt a discussion, rather than to create separate data. As such it is interview data that is presented in the analysis of this research but this was facilitated by the use of creative methods.

Creative Methods

Creative and visual methods have been found to be effective approaches that researchers can use to better enable the voices of young people to be included in research (Kara et al, 2015). Using visual approaches alongside semi-structured interviews allows young people to provide details about their life and generate multi-layered data (Stirling, 2015). Additionally, using visual approaches can help to reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and young person as the young people can have control over what they create and include (Stirling, 2015). This in turn can empower the young person and allow them to participate in research in a way that is meaningful for them (Kara et al, 2015). These published claims led me to explore creative methods. Research investigating the views and experiences of young

people with SEMH needs has found that asking participants to map out their educational experiences in the form of a timeline allowed them to identify their own critical moments in education (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Similarly, O'Connor et al (2011) concluded that using life grids (a similar visual method to map out a timeline of experiences) was an effective approach for gaining the views of young people, aged between 14-16 years old, with SEMH needs on sensitive topics. Additionally, research conducted to explore young people's educational trajectory found that using life grids enabled the researchers to understand the complex trajectory and factors that impacted on young people's educational careers (Ashwin et al, 2009). For these reasons, therefore, I chose to use a qualitative approach that utilised creative methods to facilitate semi-structured interviews. These creative methods involved using a visual approach, encouraging the young people to map out their educational timelines.

Method and Procedure

Participants and Sampling

I used a purposive sampling technique to select and recruit participants, as the young people needed to meet inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for participants is stated below:

- Participants must be between 13-16 years old.
- All participants needed to be on the school SEN register with SEMH needs identified as their primary area of need and they must be aware of this label.
- All participants also needed to currently be identified as receiving free school meals and be aware that they receive these.

I interviewed four participants, three females and one male aged between 15-16 years old. Clarke and Braun (2013) wrote that a sufficient number of interviews for a small-scale research project using thematic analysis approaches was between six-10. Therefore, as this research project used a thematic analysis approach I had initially aimed to recruit between six-10 participants in line with this guidance. However, recruitment of participants was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (refer to COVID-19 statement). Many schools were unwilling to support young people to participate in sensitive research within the context of a challenging academic year due to concerns about the wellbeing of the young people. Furthermore, recruitment was complicated by the closing of schools at both a national and local level as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, participants were recruited following the reopening of schools in March 2021 and due to the time frames of the doctorate it was not possible to continue with recruitment beyond April 2021. Despite this challenge I acknowledge that there is no specific rules on sample size and factors such as the quality of the interview data and usefulness of the

information must be considered (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Furthermore, thematic analysis lends itself to both small and large data samples meaning for this research using a smaller than planned population sample remained appropriate for my chosen analysis method (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Initially, it had also been my hope that participants would be recruited from different schools to enable me to compare their experiences. However, due to the difficulties I experienced recruiting participants all the young people who participated attended the same Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). This was a PRU for young people aged four to 16 years old in the South West of England. The PRU had 80 pupils on roll at the time this research was completed and 46.3% of young people on roll were eligible for FSMs. Despite all four of the young people attending the same PRU at the time of the interviews, they had all previously attended different secondary schools and were able to reflect on their experiences of these settings. Therefore, I felt it was still possible to draw comparisons from their different experiences.

I decided to conduct this research with participants between the ages of 13-16 years old for multiple reasons. In line with the General Data Protection Regulations (Information Commissioner's Office, 2018) young people in this age group are able to consent to participating in research for themselves and therefore this reduces any ethical risk that they may feel persuaded into participating in the research project and affords them more agency and control over their participation. Additionally, I felt young people in this age group would be able to reflect on their experiences throughout their educational career. Young people in secondary school have been found to have a greater understanding of the environmental impacts such as home experiences on their SEMH needs and education (Jalali & Morgan, 2017). Therefore, I felt this age group would be more able to discuss and reflect on their experiences of both poverty and their SEMH needs and how these factors impacted on their education than their younger peers.

Initially, I had planned for the participants to be required to have an EHCP with SEMH identified as their primary area of need. I decided that this would be the criteria as SEMH is a broad area of need and one definition is not clearly agreed upon (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). In an EHCP application, multiple professionals have to agree on the young person's SEN and identify their primary area of need. Therefore, I felt this would help to ensure that the young person's needs were accurately described by the label SEMH. However, due to the difficulties I experienced recruiting participants I amended my inclusion criteria to include any young people on the school SEN register who had SEMH identified as a primary area of need. This significantly increased the number of young people who met the criteria to participate and therefore made recruitment easier.

My final criterion was that young people must be currently in receipt of free school meals. The qualification for receiving free school meals relates to parental benefit receipt. Families may be entitled to free school meals for school aged children and young people if parents receive income support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit run-on or Universal Credit (Gov.UK, 2021a). There are some additional stipulations for specific circumstances however; these qualifications indicate that FSMs can, therefore, be used as an arbitrary method of identifying a family's social economic status. I chose to use this measure, as schools are required to store the data about which young people receive free school meals making it easy to identify young people who may meet my criteria. Additionally, as this data is already stored it does not require families to disclose any further information about their financial circumstances. I chose to use the language of 'free school meals' when speaking to the participants and avoided using the term poverty in the interviews due to possible negative connotations the young people may have associated with the term poverty.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants were recruited through schools Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) who acted as the gatekeepers in this research as they held the data about which young people met the inclusion criteria. Appendix D shows my ethics application form, which also outlines my recruitment procedure plan. Initially I contacted the SENCOs at all the schools in a large town in the South West of England that provided education for young people between ages 13-16 who have SEMH needs. This included mainstream secondary schools, a specialist provision for young people with SEMH needs and an alternative learning provision. However, due to recruitment difficulties I amended my approach and instead used my contacts with educational psychologist colleagues to help support my recruitment by requesting that they shared my email with the SENCOs they worked with in schools across England. In my initial email to SENCOs I outlined the research and the inclusion criteria for participants (see Appendix E). I asked SENCOs to pass on the participant information sheet, parent information sheet, the consent form and the confidentiality protocol (Appendices F, G, H & I) to young people who met the inclusion criteria. The young people could then contact me directly or express their interest to their school SENCO. Alternatively, if the SENCO's replied to my email and said they did not have any young people in the school who met my criteria they were thanked and not contacted again.

Method and Procedure

My research consisted of two meetings with each participant. These meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. My research was conducted during the unprecedented events that resulted from the outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore, to ensure participant and researcher safety, whilst also following the government guidance around social distancing, I decided virtual contact would be most appropriate. There are both benefits and drawbacks to conducting research online (Janghorban et al, 2014). The approach allows for the research to be conducted in conditions convenient for the participant and verbal and nonverbal cues can be observed using video calls (Janghorban et al, 2014). Additionally, my experiences in practice had led me to find that some young people with additional needs were showing a preference for virtual communication. Therefore, I hoped that by using this approach I would recruit participants who may have been reluctant to engage in a face-to-face interview and felt more comfortable using an online platform. However, I was mindful of the additional ethical considerations required when using online interviewing with young people. I explore these considerations later in the chapter.

During the initial arrangements for the virtual meetings all the young people requested that a familiar adult was present for the conversations. Therefore, a member of school staff was present for all virtual meetings with the young people. My first virtual meeting was an opportunity to build rapport and ensure that the participant had understood the information in the consent form and participant information sheet. I began this session by reminding the young people of the information within the participant information sheet and reading them the consent form. I then asked the participant if they had any questions. If they were happy to continue and provided consent, we then had an informal conversation based around the young people's interests. This session was to build rapport between the participants and myself, as the researcher. Building rapport with young people is important to enable them to feel empowered to express their views and help to balance the researcher and young person roles within the interview (Greene & Hogan, 2012). Due to the sensitive nature of the topics discussed in the research it was of increased importance to spend time building rapport to help the young people feel comfortable to discuss these issues.

The semi-structured interview facilitated with a creative method took place in the second virtual meeting. As previously discussed in this chapter, I used a visual timeline approach to support this interview. The young people were asked to draw a timeline of their educational experiences mapping on any important events that happened either in school or at home. Due to the virtual nature of the

research, I allowed the young people time to draw their timelines in the interview and then asked them to share what they had drawn. All the participants chose to share this with me by reading out what they had written and discussing it. At the end of the interview a member of school staff took photographs of the timelines the young people had drawn and these were shared with me via email. Anonymised versions of all the young people's timelines can be seen in Chapter Four. I completed the interviews using the topic guide whilst making reference to their timelines. I concluded the interviews by summarising what had been said and asking participants if there was anything additional they wished to add. After the interviews, I wrote down my feelings and initial responses in a research journal (Appendix C). This helped me to process some of my own emotions felt in response to these interviews on sensitive topics. It also enabled me to reflect on my own constructs and how that may impact on my interpretation of the data in line with my axiology.

An interview topic guide was used to guide the conversation and support the research in the second virtual meeting (Appendix J). The topic guide comprised of the interview questions and prompts. This was broken down into seven steps:

Step 1: I read the consent form and participant information sheet to the participants reminding them of their right to withdraw at any time. I then asked participants if they were happy to continue with the interview.

Step 2: I asked the young people to draw a timeline of their school experiences mapping on any events that felt important to them. When needed I asked the young people some prompt questions relating to their educational history to help them complete their timelines.

Step 3: I allowed the young people time to complete their timeline.

Step 4: I asked the young people to explain their timelines to me. If the young people did not discuss their views and experiences about first being identified as having SEMH needs I asked a question to elicit a conversation about this topic.

Step 5: I asked the young people questions to explore their experiences of having SEMH needs whilst also being eligible for free school meals.

Step 6: I asked the participants about their future hopes and dreams.

Step 7: The interview was ended and I asked the young people how they felt about having participated in the research. They were then thanked for their involvement. All participants were provided with a

sheet of age-appropriate support services they could contact if they wished following the interview (Appendix K)

The questions in the interview topic guide (Appendix J) were open ended and the order of questions was flexible to support the young people participating to provide longer responses and allow me to be responsive to the different topics the young people discussed (Greene & Hogan, 2012). Throughout the interviews I was also mindful of my own body language and responses. The social skills of a researcher e.g. posture, eye contact and active listening can all impact the dynamic between a participant and researcher as well as potentially impact the research findings (Greene & Hogan, 2012). Therefore, I aimed to keep an open demeanour, use active listening strategies and good non-verbal communication for example maintaining appropriate eye contact, smiling and nodding throughout my interviews.

Analysis of Data

Justification of Thematic Analysis

There were several reasons why I selected thematic analysis as my method for data analysis. First, thematic analysis is a method of data analysis that is accessible to understand and interpret (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The accessibility of thematic analysis allowed me to share the research findings with the school that supported participant recruitment and I hope it will also allow my research to be accessible to other educational provisions in the future to support professional development. It had also initially been planned that participatory approaches would be used during the analysis process to help ensure that the research was reflective of the young people's views. The accessibility of thematic analysis made it a good choice for this planned approach. However, due to the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on my recruitment timelines the PRU that the participants attended was unwilling to support this final step of the research as it would have meant virtually meeting with the young people in May 2021, which was the assessment season for pupils in Year 10 and 11. As a result it was not possible to use participatory approaches for this research.

Despite this, another benefit of thematic analysis is that it allows flexibility both in its approach and in the researcher's theoretical underpinnings (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This meant that it would be an appropriate data analysis method to fit with my creative methodology. Additionally, thematic analysis fits within a positive model of psychology (Clarke & Braun, 2017) and therefore is a suitable approach to fit with the resilience framework that this research aims to sit within.

Thematic analysis is also a method of analysis that is effective for identifying patterns in data relating to participants individual experiences, views and perspectives (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This is relevant to my research as my aim was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences, views and perspectives of the young people who participated.

Finally, thematic analysis is suitable for both large and small datasets (Clarke & Braun, 2017). When I began this research, I was uncertain how many participants I would recruit and therefore the flexibility of thematic analysis meant it was suitable for my uncertain sample size.

It must be noted that there are also some limitations of using thematic analysis as a data analysis method. Data analysed using thematic analysis is difficult to recreate and is influenced by the individual researcher's interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As my research is a representation of young people's views and perspectives it will not be replicable. Different young people with different experiences would have led to different data. However, to overcome my influence as a researcher my thesis supervisor reviewed my themes during the data analysis process. Additionally, I have reflected on my emotions and individual perspective of the research in my researcher journal (Appendix C).

Thematic Analysis Process

Clarke and Braun (2017, pg. 297) describe thematic analysis as *"a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data"*. It is a systematic approach to coding data and collating themes to interpret key features within a data set (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This research data was analysed using an inductive approach at a semantic level meaning the themes identified were directly related to the data itself and based explicitly on what the participant said (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For my analysis I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of data analysis with consideration of their more recently published update (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) are:

1. Familiarise yourself with the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the benefits that can come from transcribing data by hand as it allows the researcher to be fully immersed in it. Therefore, for this initial step I immersed myself in the data by transcribing by hand. I then familiarised myself with the data by reading the transcripts thoroughly and taking note of particular items of interest.

2. Complete initial coding across the entire data set.

Coding is the process of identifying aspects of the data that are of interest to the analyst (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I did this by working through each interview transcript individually and electronically annotating them with the initial codes I identified based on areas of interest from the interview data (Appendix L). I labelled codes by briefly describing the content of each particular aspect of data using a word or short phrase.

3. Generating initial themes by collating the codes.

In line with Braun and Clarke's (2019) update this phase of analysis refers to 'generating themes' rather than using the original term 'searching for themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I decided to use the updated term for this phase as it emphasises that the themes from this data were not pre-existing within the transcripts but were generated through researcher analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

At this phase I focused on a broader level to explore potential themes across all the data. I did this by combining different codes that connected together to form overarching themes or subthemes or discarding a code that lacked strength or relevance to the research question. I chose to transfer codes to post-it notes and visually map out this process using mind maps (Appendix M). I moved different post-it notes with codes that were similar into groups and continued to move them about until I felt happy that the groups of codes were representative of possible themes. Within each possible theme I then separated the codes into possible subthemes by physically separating the post-it notes and marking them under possible subtheme headings. I continued to do this until all the codes that appeared in more than one interview or appeared more than once in an individual interview were included into themes.

4. Review the themes and create a theme map.

For this part of the analysis, I reviewed my themes by rereading the codes identified in step two and reviewing them to see if they made a coherent pattern within the themes. To do this I typed out the codes into tables under the headings of each theme and subtheme (Appendix N). Once I was confident that they made a coherent pattern I then created and refined my theme map. I then shared this with my supervisor to reduce any potential researcher bias. We talked through the themes identified and moved some subthemes to help ensure the themes were accurate reflections of the findings.

5. Define and name the themes.

At this stage I defined and refined my themes by focusing on what the theme was truly about and what aspect of the data each theme captured. I talked the potential names of the themes through with my supervisor and agreed with her the final names.

6. Write up the findings in a report.

At this final stage I wrote up my analysis and findings as part of this doctoral thesis. This is outlined in Chapter 4.

Ethical Considerations and Approval

The University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee approved my research (Appendix D). Throughout my research I have consulted the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) as well as the BPS Code of Human Ethics Research (2014). I have attempted to adhere to the ethical principles outlined in these codes whilst also considering the specific ethical concerns that could have presented within this research study.

Protection from Harm

The most fundamental consideration when conducting research with young people is protection from harm (Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC), 2020). Researchers working with young people must consider, as widely as possible, the potential harm that could come to participants (ERIC, 2020). I was particularly mindful of this ethical principle due to the sensitive nature of my research and the virtual nature of my interviews. There were several factors I considered. First, to maximize the benefits for the young people I wanted to ensure that their voices were accurately heard and represented. The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) outlines the importance of young people's voices being heard on matters or decisions that are important or affect them. However, young people's views, particularly the views of young people with SEMH needs are often the least heard (Cooper, 2006). Within my research, I used creative approaches alongside semi-structured interviews to help ensure the young people's voices were captured and that my findings reflected their views.

Other considerations that I made to protect participants from harm related to my inclusion criteria and methodology. My inclusion criteria for participants was set that all young people had to be aware prior to the interview that they were identified as having SEMH needs and received free school meals. This was to reduce the risk that the young people may have been emotionally affected by the topics discussed in the interview. Additionally, due to the sensitive nature of the research I also planned my method carefully. I used a rapport building session to help the young people feel comfortable to share

their experiences with me and for my second session with the young people I used a timeline approach to support a semi-structured interview. Research has found this to be an effective method of gaining the views of young people on sensitive topics whilst helping to maintain a relaxed and supportive atmosphere for those participating (O'Connor et al, 2011). I had initially planned to also complete a third meeting with the young people to discuss the findings and themes and to allow them to discuss any emotional responses they may have had following the interview. However, as I have already outlined in this thesis, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant I collected data in March 2021. As a result, this meant that a third meeting with young people would be required to take place in the summer term. The school that I recruited participants through were not comfortable to do this as the summer term is when Year 10 and 11 students complete assessments for their GCSE's. As all my participants were in Year 10 and 11, to avoid disruption to their GCSE's, it was agreed that this final meeting would not take place. I ended all my interviews by offering my participants a document signposting them to age-appropriate services should they wish to seek further support after the interview and discuss any emotions that the interviews may have evoked (Appendix K).

I have already outlined that in order to practice ethically and minimise the risks to the physical health of participants and the researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic I decided to complete all of my interviews virtually. Within this chapter I have already outlined the benefits and drawbacks of using virtual interviews with young people. However, to maintain ethical practice and reduce the risk of harm to participants I followed the BPS (2020) guidance about working with young people using online video platforms. I used the online video platform Microsoft Teams, as this platform met the confidentiality requirements of the University of Bristol and was approved by the University of Bristol ethics committee. In my participant information sheet (Appendix F) and parent information (Appendix I) sheet I also outlined the importance of having privacy for the interview but having a trusted adult close by in case emotional support is required.

All the young people I interviewed requested to have a trusted adult present in the room with them during all the virtual meetings. The decision to allow an additional adult into the room during the interviews is one that required consideration. Research has found that an additional adult can inhibit young people or influence what they choose to say in an interview (Greene & Hogan, 2012). However, due to the online nature of the interviews additional considerations about how to help young people feel safe and what to do if they become emotionally distressed are important (BPS, 2020). Additionally, the young people had request to have a trusted adult present as they felt it would make them feel more

comfortable. Therefore, I agreed that on this occasion the benefits of this arrangement outweighed the costs. As a result of this decision a trusted member of school staff was present for all virtual meetings to provide emotional support and reassurance for young people if it was required.

Power Imbalance

A key difference between research with adult participants and research with young people is the potential power imbalance between the researcher and participant (Greene & Hogan, 2012). The differences in social status cannot be avoided but researchers can act in an attempt to minimise a potential power imbalance (Greene & Hogan, 2012). Young people, particularly those with vulnerable characteristics such as having SEMH needs or growing up in poverty, may have little or no experience of being asked their views (Greene & Hogan, 2012). This potentially new experience coupled with the potential perception young people may have that as an adult the researcher holds a position of authority can create a power imbalance in research (Greene & Hogan, 2012). In my research I attempted to minimise the impact of this potential power imbalance. I did this by having a rapport building session, allowing the young people to develop confidence interacting with me as a researcher. I also used visual methodology, which researchers have found can reduce the power imbalance between participants and the researcher (Stirling, 2015). Researchers have argued that language heavy interviews can disempower young people and therefore supporting these with visuals can attempt to readdress some of this balance (Stirling, 2015). The young people in my interviews were asked to create a timeline of their education marking on important events. This open approach enabled the young people to contribute their views on their terms and in a way that is meaningful to them by them being given the control to decide what they wanted to represent on their timeline (Kara et al, 2015).

Informed Consent

An additional ethical consideration in my research with young people was about consent and choice. When conducting research with young people it is important that they are fully informed of what the research entails including the research aims, how long the research will last, what will happen with the results and any potential limits to confidentiality (Greene & Hogan, 2012). I adapted my consent form to be accessible for all my participants and read it to them at the beginning of each virtual meeting to ensure they understood. I also reminded participants of their right to withdraw at any point as an additional aspect to informed consent is respecting a young person's decision not to participate (ERIC, 2020). To help participants be fully informed about the research I also had a confidentiality protocol that was shared with all the participants prior to them consenting to take part and read out again to them before they began their interviews. In this I outlined the limits to my confidentiality and that I would

have to break confidentiality if something was discussed that gave me concern for the young person's safety. Additionally, as SENCO's acted as gatekeepers for my research and they hold a position of power within the young people's schools there was a risk that young people may feel pressured or persuaded to participate (Greene & Hogan, 2012). To reduce this risk I decided to interview young people age 13-16 years old as they were able to consent for themselves and had the option to contact me directly if they wanted to participate. During my interviews with young people I also remained alert to any body language or non-verbal communications that may indicate that the young person did not want to participate. Throughout the interviews all the young people displayed body language indicating they were happy to continue to take part in the research.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Maintaining privacy and confidentiality was another ethical consideration for this research. As part of this I was considerate of a young person's right to privacy and carefully considered my questions to reduce the risk of participants feeling pressured to share information they may wish to keep private (ERIC, 2020). Furthermore, as I have already mentioned to keep the young people safe, I used an online video platform that had been approved by the University of Bristol's ethics committee and met the required standards of confidentiality. I also had a confidentiality protocol to explain to the participants the limits to my confidentiality. This informed participants that I would aim to maintain confidentiality in all circumstances. However, if they said anything during their interviews that made me concerned that they were at risk of harm I would be required to break confidentiality. This confidentiality protocol was shown to participants along with the participant information sheet and consent form. I also read it to participants on both occasions that we met to ensure they had understood the limits to the confidentiality of this research. Additional to these considerations I maintained anonymity for participants by using pseudonyms that the young people had chosen for themselves, removing the names of the young people's schools from interview transcripts and removing any references to where the young people lived or have previously lived.

Data Protection

Finally, all of the data that was collected as part of this research was securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). I did this by using an encrypted device to store all recorded interviews data and consent forms. Once these had been transcribed the recordings were then deleted from the encrypted device. The transcribed interviews were anonymised using pseudonyms and the University of Bristol's server was used to securely store the data. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was unable to securely store confidential paper work in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Bristol as I had

originally planned. Therefore, instead I chose to have no physical paper consent forms and participants verbally recorded consent that was then transcribed. The transcribed consent forms were then saved in a password-protected file on the University of Bristol's server.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology used in this research. First, I began by discussing the evolution of my research aims and questions. My philosophical assumptions were then discussed considering the impact of taking a constructivist and interpretivist approach on my research. I also reflected on my own axiology. I then explained my methodological orientation and rationale behind this. Next, I detailed the participant recruitment, method and procedure, data collection and analysis for this research. To conclude, I explored the ethical considerations for this research and how I attempted to overcome these.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and data analysis of this research with consideration of the existing literature. The methods used for data collection and the Thematic Analysis approach used to analyse the data is outlined in Chapter Three (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data from all four interviews was analysed and combined to create six overarching themes and related subthemes. Figure 1 illustrates the identified themes and subthemes that are discussed in this chapter. I begin by providing cameos giving details about all four of the young people who participated and presenting their anonymised timelines. I then discuss each theme and its related subthemes individually in the order they are presented in Figure 1, beginning with 'positive school experiences'. The six themes, in the order I discuss them, are 'positive school experiences', 'support', 'transitions', 'relationships', 'affective factors' and 'intersectionality'. Throughout this analysis section I use quotes from the participants to illustrate and support the identified themes. I also draw on existing literature and consider the themes in relation to the underpinning theoretical contexts of intersectionality and resilience to contextualise my themes and deepen the analysis. To conclude I present a risk and protective factors framework developed from the findings of this doctoral research.

I have observed that the findings from this present research study closely align to those presented in my literature review. There are many similarities between the themes identified in this doctoral research and the themes identified in research studies that have focused on exploring the views of young people with SEMH needs. As outlined in Chapter Three the findings of this present research study were reached following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phased approach to thematic analysis. This is a reflexive analysis approach that relies on researcher's interpretation of the data. However, the similarities between the findings in this present research study and past research studies indicate that young people with SEMH needs have previously raised and discussed similar topics when interviewed in past research. I will explore this reflection in greater depth throughout this chapter.

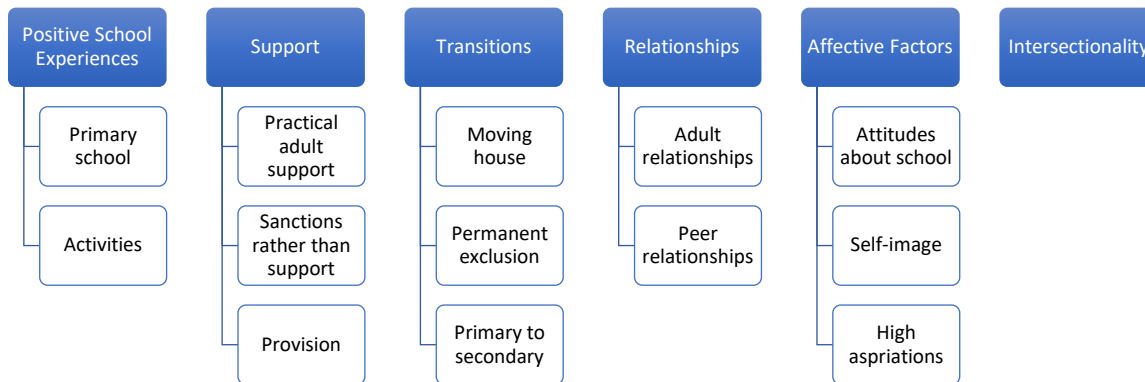


Figure 1: Visual representation of themes and subthemes

Participants

As outlined in Chapter 3, four young people participated in the research. All four young people attended the same Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). However, prior to starting at the PRU, all four participants attended different mainstream secondary schools. Therefore, the young people’s reflections about their school experiences were, at times, in relation to different schools. The cameos below describe each participant, their individual experiences and the timelines they drew during their interviews. The young people all chose pseudonyms that are used throughout this thesis to protect anonymity. The pictures from the young people’s timelines have also been anonymised with aspects of their writing being covered or removed to maintain confidentiality.

Lily

At the time of the interview Lily was a Year 11 student and aged 16 years old. Since starting school at age four Lily has attended six educational provisions. On her timeline she mapped out all six of these school moves. She started school in England before her family moved abroad when she was in primary school and subsequently returned to England. Lily considered her family’s move abroad to be a positive experience but she viewed her return to England as a negative experience. Lily had also attended two

mainstream secondary schools and been permanently excluded from both. She moved to the PRU when she was in Year 8 and has attended that setting for three years. Lily was planning to leave the PRU at the end of the academic year to begin her chosen college course.

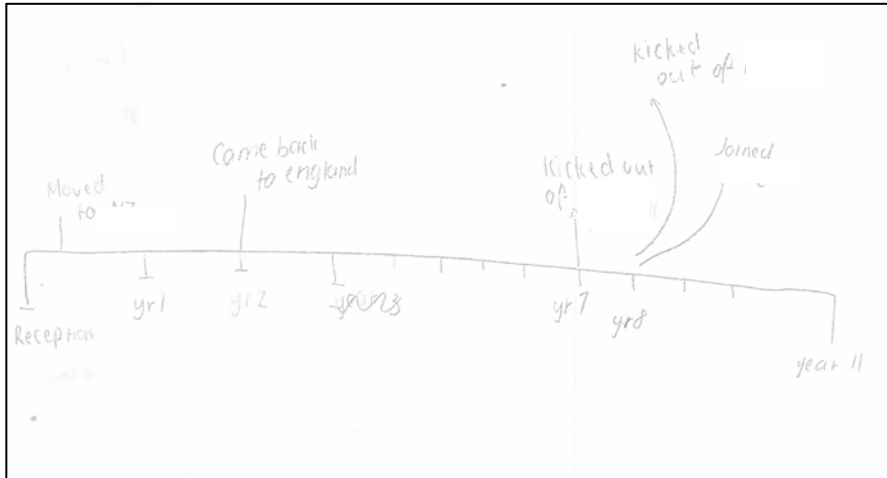


Figure 2: Lily's anonymised timeline.

Ariana

Ariana was also in Year 11 and aged 16 years old at the time of the interview. On her timeline Ariana mapped out positive experiences she had had in primary school including learning to read, a school play and the Year 6 leavers show. She also included positive experiences from her time in mainstream secondary school writing that in Year 8 there were "more games and practicals". When Ariana was in Year 10, she had a managed move organised by her school for her to attend a different local mainstream secondary school. Managed moves are a formal agreement between two schools that allows a young person at risk of permanent exclusion to move to a new setting on a trial period (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). For Ariana this move failed and she returned to her original mainstream secondary school following the trial period. At the beginning of Year 11 Ariana was permanently excluded from her mainstream secondary school and joined the PRU. At the time of the interview Ariana had been at the PRU for six months. Similar to Lily, she was planning to leave at the end of the academic year to begin her chosen college course.

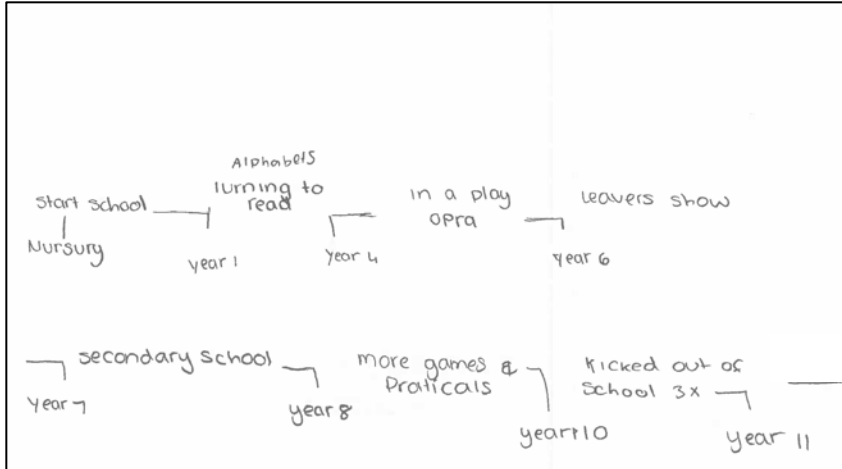


Figure 3: Ariana's anonymised timeline

Bob

At the time of the interview Bob was in Year 10 and 15 years old. Bob mapped out only a few key events on his timeline. These events included two school trips; one was when he was in Year 6 and the other was when he was in Year 7. He spoke positively about both these experiences. The only other event Bob chose to put on his timeline was when he was permanently excluded from his mainstream secondary school. Bob was in Year 9 when this happened and subsequently joined the PRU in the same academic year. He had been at the PRU for approximately one year when he was interviewed.



Figure 4: Bob's anonymised timeline

Jade

Jade was also in Year 10 and 15 years old at the time of the interview. In primary school Jade had moved house with her family from one part of England to another. This had resulted in her moving schools. Although Jade spoke about her experiences of primary school, on her timeline she chose to begin from Year 7. Jade chose to draw only a few key events from her secondary school experience on her timeline. She also chose to write sentences about each event. On Jade's timeline she has written that in Year 7 she was "always in IE in [school name]". IE is an abbreviation she has used to mean internal exclusion. In Year 8 she has written "half way through the year I was kicked out of [name of school] because I was always in trouble and then I went to the [name of PRU]". In Year 9, once Jade had joined the PRU she has written "And I got more help and less people to annoy me". At the time of interview, Jade had been at the PRU for two years.



Figure 5: Jade's anonymised timeline

Themes and Subthemes

The following sections present the themes and subthemes for this research study. The themes identified from analysis of the data connect to both research questions:

1. How do young people with SEMH needs who are also living in poverty and attending a PRU experience school?
2. What do these young people feel helps or hinders them in school?

The themes and how they related to the research questions will be address alongside consideration of existing literature to contextualise the themes and provide deeper analysis of the data. The research questions will then be answered in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Theme 1: Positive School Experiences

The first theme captures the young people’s perspectives regarding positive experiences of school. Figure 2 visually represents the theme and the two subthemes within it: ‘primary school’ and ‘activities’. I will first discuss the overall theme and then go on to explore the subthemes within it.

All four of the young people spoke about positive experiences they have had in school during their interviews. The young people were asked to map out their school experiences onto a timeline at the beginning of each of their interviews. Two of the young people began their timelines by mapping on the positive experiences they had had in school. When asked to explain their timelines at the beginning of the interview another young person also chose to begin by discussing a positive experience she had had in school. It is my interpretation that because these young people chose to begin their timelines or interviews with these positive experiences they may be important memories for them when they are thinking about school.

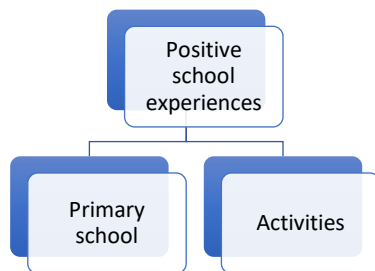


Figure 6: Visual representation of Theme 1 and related subthemes

Subtheme 1a: Primary school

Primary school was a significant topic discussed by all four young people. All the young people felt positively about their primary school experiences and spoke about examples of these. Two participants said only positive things when they were remembering their primary school experiences. Bob summarised his experiences of primary school by saying:

Bob: I think they were good primary school experiences and I think they were interesting.

The young people also gave specific examples of the positive experiences they had during their primary school years. The positive experiences of primary school included reflecting on what they had learnt,

experiences they had had and their own behaviour at that time. Ariana reflected on her behaviour in primary school and how positively she felt about that:

Ariana: I never had my name on the bad side of the board in Year 6 so yeah I was pretty proud of myself then.

All four participants felt that primary school had been a positive experience for them. This is supported by the findings from research by O'Connor et al (2011). Similar to this doctoral research, O'Connor et al (2011) completed research with one young person aged 14, who was attending a PRU. The young person was asked to map out their school experience on a life grid and participate in a semi-structured interview. The young person outlined primary school as a positive experience and identified this as a time he had felt happy in school (O'Connor et al, 2011). This was the only literature I reviewed that discussed a similar finding relating to positive primary school experiences. However, this may be due to the variations in approaches used by researchers to collect data and the varied research questions researchers were aiming to answer. O'Connor et al's (2011) research is of particular relevance to the present research study due to the similarities in methodology, age group and type of school setting the participant was attending. Analysis of the data indicates that for the young people in this present research primary school was a time they felt happy in education and they look back on this experience positively. This may suggest that the young people who participated in this research perceive the primary model of delivery more favourably than the secondary model.

Subtheme 1b: Activities

As well as experiences in primary school the young people gave specific examples of particular activities they had enjoyed in school and felt positively about. The research findings indicated that the young people felt positively about practical experiences and activities they had done during their school career. These included school trips, school plays, leavers assemblies, sports, science practicals, games, cooking and music lessons. Lily spent some of her primary school years at school in another country. During her interview she spoke about the activities she had done at this school that she had enjoyed:

Lily: We'd learn stuff like swimming, running, cycling. There was a lot of like activity days. The food was really nice at school. Yeah, it was very sporty there which I quite liked.

The examples of activities that the young people had enjoyed and viewed positively spanned both their primary and secondary school experiences. Ariana discussed the positive experiences and activities she had enjoyed when she was in Year 8:

Ariana: And then Year 8 we were still playing games and like more practicals, like science practicals and others really.

Tellis-James and Fox (2016) found that practical learning opportunities which, young people with SEMH needs felt were relevant for their future created positive learning opportunities both in school and at home. These findings from Tellis-James and Fox (2016) are similar to the findings from this present research study in which young people identified specific activities they had enjoyed in school, many of which were practical. In addition to this, when the young people in this doctoral research were interviewed, they also spoke about extra curricula activities they had enjoyed in school such as sports, music lessons and school plays. Michael and Frederickson (2013) similarly found that young people with SEMH needs valued having extra curricula activities such as school trips and sports provided by their PRU. Building on this further, practical learning opportunities and extra curricula activities were also identified to be factors that protected young people living in poverty and helped them to succeed despite the barriers they faced (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013). These findings indicate that for the young people in this present research having a curriculum that incorporates opportunities for practical and extra curricula activities is important for creating positive school experiences despite the barriers they face. Resilience literature also identifies that experiencing success, feeling in control and enjoying learning is linked to young people feeling good in themselves (Marsten, 2014). Therefore, to support young people's development in education it is important that their curriculum includes activities they can enjoy, feel successful at and feel good about.

Theme 1 Summary

Overall, it is an interesting finding that young people began their interviews by discussing positive school experiences despite the challenges they have faced throughout their education. It is of particular interest because, although there is some supporting research for young people with SEMH needs and young people living in poverty (O'Connor et al, 2011; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013) most of the literature reviewed within this thesis has not discussed the positive experiences young people have had in school. In my literature review I identified that there was a gap in the literature as there was no research studies identified that explored positive experiences in education for young people with SEMH needs living in poverty.

In relation to the first research question the findings indicate that the young people's experiences of primary school and specific practical or extra curricula activities were positive school experiences. Furthermore, these positive experiences were important enough for the young people to begin their

interviews with them. This suggests that despite the barriers these young people have faced positive experiences from school remain significant for them. The findings from this research also contributed to answering my second research question. It appears through the analysis of data and consideration of existing resilience literature (Marsten, 2014) that these positive experiences in school were factors that helped the young people interviewed through their education.

Theme 2: Support

The second theme identified in this research was 'support'. All four young people discussed the support they wished they had received as well as the support they have been given and were currently receiving in school. When the young people spoke about support they spoke about both the difficulties they experienced when they felt support was not in place and the benefits of getting the right support in school. This theme has been broken down into three subthemes: 'practical adult support', 'sanctions rather than support' and 'provision'. Figure 3 outlines the theme and the three subthemes within it. I will now discuss each subtheme individually.

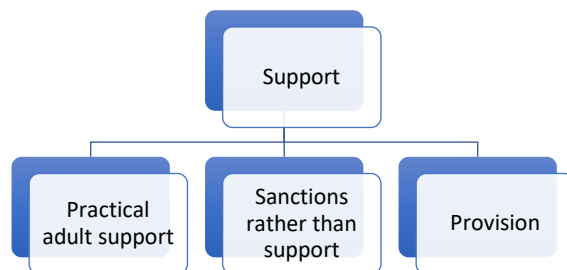


Figure 7: Visual representation of Theme 2 and related subthemes

Subtheme 2a: Practical adult support

The young people all spoke about support they had received from adults multiple times throughout their interviews. Initially, when reflecting on their experiences of support in mainstream secondary schools the young people discussed feeling unsupported:

Lily: I kinda wish there was more support for people who like struggle at school because I didn't really get that.

When Lily was asked what advice she would give another young person with SEMH needs who received free school meals she said:

Lily: Make sure they are giving you the support that you're like you're open to. Just make sure you get what you are entitled to. Yeah, because I didn't. I really didn't. The PRU has taught me a lot.

Feeling unsupported by the adults in their mainstream secondary schools was a theme commonly identified by all the young people. However, in contrast to this the young people also discussed the increased support they felt they had received since moving to the PRU:

Jade: I get a lot more support than I used to. Nearly all the teachers help me.

The young people felt positively about this increased practical support from adults. In their interviews Jade and Bob both spoke specifically about getting adult support to help with their academic work:

Jade: I get Maths support, English support and stuff like that.

Ariana and Lily spoke about being supported to help manage their emotional wellbeing:

Lily: They'd just take me out and chat to me. They'd give me five. They would always check on me in the morning to make sure I was like I wasn't angry or anything. It's just stuff like that. It's the little things, just having a chat with someone. It just made it ten times better.

Overall, all four young people felt positively about the increased adult support that they received in the PRU. Jade was the only young person who mentioned receiving support from the adults at home. When she was talking about the support she receives at the PRU that she feels has helped her to develop she added:

Jade: Yeah, and because my mum wakes me up in the morning. Just because otherwise I'd sleep the whole day and I'd probably miss my taxi here [the PRU].

Jade's example of support that she got at home is related to the practicalities of waking up and getting ready for school. She felt that the support from her Mum in this way was another factor that helped her to be successful in school. Jade was the only young person who identified receiving support from a parent as being a factor that helped her in school. In the majority of the literature I have reviewed for this doctoral thesis young people have not discussed the impact of family relationships. However, O'Sullivan et al (2019) interviewed students from disadvantaged backgrounds who attended the University of Oxford and found the students felt family had an important role in helping and encouraging them to attend university. Michael and Frederickson (2013) also found in their research

that young people with SEMH needs perceived their family to be a factor that supported their attendance at school and without that support they felt their attendance would be likely to drop (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). This is similar to Jade's view that her Mum helped her by encouraging her and supporting her with the practicalities getting ready for school to maintain her attendance. For Jade, therefore, the support she received from her Mum was a factor that directly impacted her school experiences and that she felt helped her to succeed in education.

Reflecting on the subtheme of 'practical adult support' it appears that the young people felt there was increased support available at their PRU compared to mainstream schools. This finding is synonymous with conclusions reached by Nind et al (2012) who found that young people with SEMH needs identified differences in the support received in mainstream schools and specialist provisions (Nind et al, 2012). They found that the alternative approaches, school ethos and school policies in an SEMH specialist provision helped the young people feel positively about education (Nind et al, 2012). Similarly, Cosma and Soni (2019) found, in their literature review, that young people with SEMH needs felt the adult support in mainstream schools was not sufficient. This research included studies that had been completed with young people who attended PRU's, specialist and mainstream provisions. Finally, Jalali & Morgan (2013) completed research with young people attending a PRU and found that young people with SEMH needs felt the additional support available in a PRU was beneficial and had a positive impact on their school experiences. Overall, therefore existing literature supports the finding from this present research that young people with SEMH needs perceive practical support from adults to be increased and better at meeting their needs when they are attending settings outside of mainstream education.

The young people in this present research study also specified what types of adult support had been helpful for them. The young people identified the increased academic support and increased support to help manage their emotional wellbeing that was provided in their PRU were factors that helped them in school. These findings are synonymous with those identified by Cosma and Soni (2019) who found that young people perceived support from adults with their academic and emotional needs as a factor that helped them in their education. This supporting literature alongside the findings of this doctoral research indicates that young people perceive academic and emotional support from adults to both be important in helping them succeed in school.

Further to this, resilience literature has discussed that experiencing difficulties with cognition and learning or having difficulties managing emotional needs are risk factors that impact young people's development of resilience and in turn their ability to thrive in school (Toland & Carrigan, 2011).

Furthermore, the DfE (2018, p18.) identified both experiencing learning difficulties and having a '*difficult temperament*' as risk factors that negatively impacted young people in their education. Therefore, for young people who experience these needs additional support is required to reduce the potential risk that these factors may hinder them in their education (DfE, 2018). To protect against these risk factors helping young people to learn the skills of self-reflection, awareness and regulation can support the development of their resilience (Rutter, 2014). Considering this research as a whole and reflecting on it in relation to the findings of this present research study it supports the conclusion that receiving adult support to manage young people's emotional wellbeing and academic needs may also be helping the young people to develop their resilience. Overall, in relation to the research questions the findings from this present research indicate that the support available from adults can impact young people's experiences of education. Furthermore, receiving the right support that meets young people's academic and emotional needs is a factor that helped the young people who participated in this research within their education.

Subtheme 2b: Sanctions rather than support

The second subtheme relates to the young people's feeling that they were given sanctions, rather than receiving the support they felt they needed. Three young people discussed being given sanctions in mainstream secondary school instead of being given support when they were having difficulties with their SEMH needs. The sanctions that the young people spoke about were detention or internal exclusion. The young people used the phrases "isolation" and "IE" when they were referring to internal exclusion. The experience of receiving sanctions rather than support was perhaps summarised best by Lily who said:

Lily: I just got told I was naughty and chucked in detention or, like, isolation.

Jade highlighted the frequency with which she felt she was being given sanctions. She explained that she felt she was always being given sanctions:

Jade: Basically, I was just always in IE and they took my lunches away from me. I had to stay in a little room.

Jade emphasised her experiences of sanctions on her timeline as well as through her conversation. The first thing Jade mapped on to her timeline was Year 7 and below that she wrote "*always in IE*". She appeared frustrated when she spoke about this topic. It was my interpretation from how regularly she spoke about this during her interview that she felt her experiences of mainstream secondary education

had been significantly influenced by her experiences of sanctions. Bob also discussed the negative ramifications he felt this approach had for young people with SEMH needs. When he was talking about his experiences of internal exclusion in a mainstream secondary school he said:

Bob: It probably made it worse for most kids. Probably it did scare some kids into not going back there but it kinda did make it worse for a lot of other kids too.

Overall, the young people felt negatively about the sanctions that had been used in mainstream education and felt that they had little impact. Michael and Frederickson (2013) also interviewed young people attending a PRU and similarly found that the young people spoke about receiving sanctions. Conversely to the findings from this doctoral research, Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that young people spoke about the effectiveness of sanctions as a deterrent. Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that consistent use of sanctions, by school staff, helped to make them effective. However, young people who participated in research by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) perceived sanctions such as detention to be inconsequential and sanctions such as exclusions to be detrimental. These findings are similar to the responses from young people in this present research study, which found that young people perceived sanctions to be ineffective and at times detrimental. The negative ramifications of using sanctions was also identified by Facey et al (2021) who found that sanctions that excluded young people from their peers, such as internal exclusion or detention, left them feeling isolated. As the findings from Michael and Frederickson (2013) spoke specifically about how sanctions should be delivered it may be these opposing findings relating to the use of sanctions are because of how the sanctions are delivered in different schools. Alternatively, it may be simply that the young people had different perspectives about the use of sanctions in school. Despite the variations in perspectives the findings from research indicate that the use of sanctions does have an impact on young people's experiences of school and for the young people in this doctoral research this impact was negative. The analysis of these findings in this doctoral research suggest that the use of sanctions in their mainstream schools, particularly internal exclusion and detention were factors that hindered the young people in school and negatively impacted their experiences.

Subtheme 2c: Provision

Another area of support that the young people spoke about in their interviews was the provision available in schools. This theme relates to the practical strategies or physical classroom arrangements that the young people felt either helped or hindered them in school. In her interview Ariana

acknowledged how different one school is from another and therefore how varied the provision available can be:

Ariana: All the schools I've been at they're quite like, they're all different.

Despite this the young people all discussed specific provision that schools put in place that they felt helped or hindered young people with SEMH needs. The young people spoke about provision such as the adult to pupil ratio in mainstream schools and not being given the space and time to calm down when they needed it. These areas of provision were identified by young people as being things they found challenging in their mainstream secondary schools. Ariana spoke about the lack of opportunity to calm down when she needed it:

Ariana: Um, like, I know how to calm myself down but, 'cause I don't like teachers following me. I don't even like one following me, 'cause I want to have like space for myself and I want to, like, think.

Ariana felt that her SEMH needs escalated when she was not given the space or time to calm and the lack of this provision in mainstream secondary school was challenging for her. In contrast to the young people's views about a lack of provision, the young people also spoke about provision that was put in place both in their mainstream schools and the PRU that they found helpful. The examples of provision that young people felt helped them in school included small class sizes, having time to calm, rewards charts and being given responsibilities. Jade discussed the benefit of having smaller class sizes in the PRU:

Jade: Probably less kids to annoy me.

Jade spoke about difficulties she had experienced navigating peer relationships and how, due to her SEMH needs, that had previously resulted in her displaying challenging behaviours. She explained that having a smaller class was beneficial as there were less young people to "annoy" her. Previous research has similarly found that young people, with SEMH needs, viewed practical arrangements and provision as being effective in supporting them in school (Jalali & Morgan, 2013). Nind et al (2012) proposed that the physical arrangements and space within a school go beyond simply the physical and also impact young people's sense of belonging and inclusion providing an explanation for why young people value provision being put in place. The findings from existing literature support the findings from this present doctoral research that young people perceive that the provision in place in schools impacts their educational experiences. Furthermore, the young people felt the provision available varies across

different school settings. Receiving the right provision, that is tailored to meet their needs, appears to be a factor that the young people felt helped them to be successful in education. However, when the right provision is not in place it can hinder them and escalate their SEMH difficulties.

Theme 2 Summary

Considering, overall, the theme of ‘support’ in relation to the research questions a number of factors were identified by the young people that they felt hindered them in their education. The young people identified a lack of adult support in mainstream secondary school, receiving sanctions rather than support and not receiving the right provision as factors that negatively impacted and hindered them in school. On occasions not receiving the right support in school was also associated with an escalation of the young people’s SEMH needs. Conversely, receiving increased practical adult support and the right provision were factors that helped the young people in school. The conclusions drawn from this analysis indicate that when young people receive support and provision that is tailored to meet their academic and emotional needs they feel they experience increased success within education. This in turn helps to protect and develop their resilience.

Theme 3: Transitions

It was apparent from the timelines that the young people drew and from their interviews that they all had experienced multiple school moves. Lily had experienced the most having moved schools six times since she started her educational career in reception. Bob had experienced the fewest school moves, having attended three different schools since he began in reception. The reasons for these school moves were varied and the subthemes reflect these variations. Despite the different reasons for the school moves all the young people spoke about how difficult it is to transition to a new school. Figure 4 is a visual representation of the theme and the subthemes identified within it. I will now explore each individual subtheme.

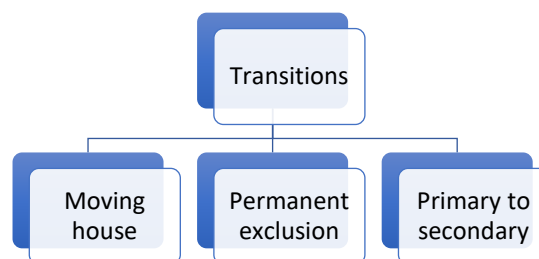


Figure 8: Visual representation of Theme 3 and related subthemes

Subtheme 3a: Moving house

Two of the participants had moved house with their family, which resulted in them also moving schools. Jade had moved from one part of England to another and Lily had moved to another country and had later returned to England. The young people both identified these house moves as significant when they were interviewed or when they drew their timelines of their school experiences. Both Jade and Lily spoke about how they had found moving schools difficult after the family moved to a new house. When Jade spoke about her experiences of primary school she said:

Jade: Well it was kind of good and bad 'cause I moved halfway through the year. I used to live in [city name] so it was a little hard to move... It's just hard to make friends when you're new.

Jade spoke most positively about her first primary school. She explained that after her family moved she found school more difficult because it was difficult to make new friends. Similarly, Lily found her move back to England after living abroad difficult in particular because the schools were “*really different*”.

As discussed in Chapter Two, a literature review conducted by Ridge (2011) found that young people growing up in poverty discussed the difficulties they felt arose due to school moves as a result of housing arrangements. In particular the literature review found that young people spoke about the social and emotional upheaval that came with having to move house and consequently move schools (Ridge, 2011). In Ridge’s (2011) literature review the young people were explicitly discussing moving houses as a result of a family’s poverty and the financial challenges that arose from that. This present research study similarly found that young people experienced social and emotional challenges as a result of moving house and consequently moving schools. However, the young people who participated in this doctoral research did not discuss the reasons for their families moving house and therefore this cannot be directly attributed to their family’s experiences of poverty. Despite this the overall conclusion remains that moving house and school impacted the young people socially and emotionally and the findings of this present research study concluded this negatively impacted their school experiences.

Subtheme 3b: Permanent exclusion

All the young people who participated in the research were attending a PRU because they had been permanently excluded from mainstream education at least once. Lily had been permanently excluded from two mainstream schools and Ariana had had a failed managed move to a different school before being permanently excluded. All four participants identified their experiences of permanent exclusion as

being significant parts of their educational careers. When Jade reflected on her experiences of being permanently excluded, she said:

Jade: All I know is I got kicked out in Year 8.

Jade spoke about her experiences of permanent exclusion in a pragmatic manner. She did not explain how she felt during that time focusing instead on the difficulties that led to that moment. When Jade spoke specifically about the incident that subsequently resulted in her permanent exclusion, however, her tone of voice indicated that she still held a lot of anger about the situation. This was particularly noticeable when she said:

Jade: The main reason I got kicked out was because I punched a kid in the head.

Interviewer: OK and how did you feel when that happened?

Jade: He called me weak. Nobody calls me weak without fearing the consequences.

In contrast, some of the young people did speak directly about how they felt during the time around their permanent exclusion. Lily spoke about the difficulties she experienced following her second permanent exclusion:

Lily: I just... I didn't go out. I always stayed at home really. I didn't... 'cause obviously I, I lost a lot of friends at [school name] and the girl I got kicked out with, she was straight back in school making new friends and I literally had no one so it wasn't a good time.

Lily's reflections on this time related to how lonely she felt following her permanent exclusion knowing her friends were still in school together. Bob also expressed negative emotions when reflecting on his experiences of permanent exclusion. He spoke about his worry and apprehension moving to a PRU:

Bob: Well to be honest I felt kind of worried because I don't know, I didn't really, I only knew a couple people here so it's kind of new and I thought it was gonna be, like, worse.

My interpretation of Bob's experience is that he felt apprehensive attending a PRU, as he had negative connotations associated with that type of school setting. This, alongside his worries about meeting new people, made the transition difficult for Bob. All four participants reflected on difficult experiences they had had around the time of, or following, their permanent exclusions from mainstream schools. Analysis from these research findings indicates that permanent exclusion brought about negative emotions of anger, feeling isolated and anxiety for the young people.

Findings from research by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) similarly concluded that young people perceived permanent exclusions to be a sanction that was detrimental for them. The young people felt that permanent exclusion negatively impacted their school experiences due to missed education (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). In contrast to these findings, however, O'Connor et al (2011) found that a young person in their research spoke positively about being permanently excluded from mainstream education. The young person spoke about feeling happier after being permanently excluded from mainstream school because they did not like the school and wanted to leave. The findings from this doctoral research align more closely with those identified by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) that permanent exclusion is detrimental for young people's education and emotional wellbeing.

Furthermore, Cefai et al (2008) explained that no young person should be left out of their school community or be left feeling that they lack a sense of belonging because this can impact their resilience. However, for young people who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education they are told to leave their school community. Lily described how she felt she had no one after being permanently excluded from her mainstream secondary and how isolating she found that experience. This is supported by the findings of Caslin (2021) who found young people felt rejected from their school community and viewed as the culprits when they were permanently excluded. When considering this alongside the resilience literature it suggests that being permanently excluded is likely to hinder young people's sense of belonging in a school which in turn impacts their development of resilience (Cefai et al, 2008). The overall conclusions drawn from this present research are that for the young people who participated being permanently excluded from mainstream education negatively impacted their experiences of school and their emotional wellbeing during that time. Additionally, there is a possibility that this experience also acted as a risk factor for the young people's development of resilience.

Subtheme 3c: Primary to secondary

The final subtheme relating to transitions is about the transition from primary to secondary school. This was a topic that all four participants spoke about when completing their timelines. The young people remembered finding the transition challenging and also remembered how they settled into the new school environment with time. When asked how he found the transition to secondary school Bob said:

Bob: Challenging but it was just like... it was good but it was, like, good once I was getting into it.

However, as well as finding the initial move to secondary school challenging Lily, Ariana and Bob all identified the first year of secondary school as the time they first began experiencing SEMH difficulties. All three of them explained how they felt their early experiences of secondary school triggered these difficulties. Lily explained this connection between transitioning to secondary school and her own SEMH needs saying:

Lily: I was quite, like, innocent and obviously secondary school changes everything for that.

Lily felt that she had been innocent during her primary school years and her move to secondary school had opened her eyes to things she had not previously known about. In particular, Lily spoke about becoming aware of drugs for the first time when she started secondary school. Lily explained in her interview that she wished she had been given more education on this topic whilst she was in primary school. She felt this would have helped her to be more prepared ahead of her transition to secondary school. Ariana and Bob also identified the start of secondary school as the time when they first began experiencing SEMH difficulties. They felt that peer relationships were particularly influential in the link between their transitions to secondary school and their development of SEMH needs. This will be discussed in the next theme: 'relationships'.

O'Connor et al (2011) supports the findings of this present research study that young people perceived their transition from primary school to secondary school to be a difficult experience. O'Connor et al (2011) interviewed one young person who similarly connected their transition to secondary school with the beginning of their SEMH difficulties. Additional research has directly explored the transition from primary to secondary school for young people with SEMH needs (Bagnall et al, 2021). In their research Bagnall et al (2021) found that the transition from primary to secondary school created conflicting emotions for children and that children show a preference for being involved in decision making processes that affect them. Reflecting on this research in consideration of the findings of this present research study it may be that Bob was also experiencing conflicting emotions when he described the transition as challenging but also good once he had settled. Although it has not been discussed in previous literature it must be noted that the transition from primary to secondary school falls at a time that many young people begin puberty. It may be that the conflicting emotions young people experience around this time could also be connected to hormone changes resulting from puberty.

Further research has found that young people with SEMH needs develop a sense of belonging in mainstream primary school but do not discuss similar feelings about mainstream secondary school

(Cosma & Soni, 2019). This is important to consider along with the findings outlined earlier in this chapter about the young people's positive perceptions of primary school. Together these findings indicate that the young people in this research may have also developed a strong sense of belonging in primary school, which in turn made their transition leaving primary school increasingly challenging. This however is difficult to confidently conclude without asking the young people further questions about this experience. Despite this, overall the young people in this present research appear to have found the transition from primary school to secondary school to be a significant and negative change. Furthermore, for some of the young people it was this negative experience that they attributed their initial development of SEMH needs indicating it notably hindered their school experience.

Theme 3 Summary

Reflecting on the theme of transitions it is apparent that overall this is another factor that the young people in this present research study spoke about negatively impacting their school experiences. The findings from this present research are, on the most part, supported by the existing literature and in line with the findings from Ridge (2011) this present research study concludes that school moves can impact young people both socially and emotionally. This finding is significant for the young people who participated in this doctoral research because they all experienced more school moves than is typically expected with one participant having had six school moves during her educational career. Cefai et al (2008) discussed how being part of the school community and having a sense of belonging is an important factor that helps young people to develop their resilience and be successful in education. Combining this existing literature with the findings from this present research study indicates that multiple school moves are likely to disrupt a young person's sense of belonging and as a result act as a risk factor in their development of resilience. Therefore, in consideration of the second research question, transitions between schools are a factor that can hinder young people with SEMH needs living in poverty.

Theme 4: Relationships

All four young people made direct references to relationships they have had with peers and adults in both their mainstream school and PRU settings. These reflections included both positive and negative experiences and came up as topics of conversation throughout the interviews, as the young people reflected on their educational careers. Figure 5 outlines the theme and related subthemes in this area. The subthemes explore both the young people's experiences with adult relationships and their relationships with their peers.

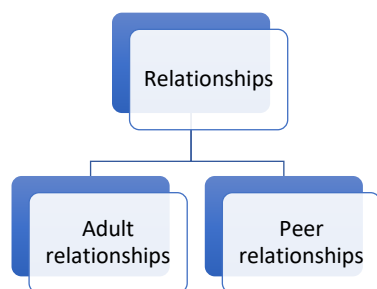


Figure 9: Visual representation of Theme 4 and related subthemes

Subtheme 4a: Adult relationships

Under the subtheme of adult relationships, I have included both the positive and negative experiences that young people discussed in relation to adult relationships. I will begin by first discussing the negative experiences on which young people reflected.

Three of the participants looked back on difficult relationships they had had with members of school staff and the impact those relationships had on their school experiences. Ariana discussed this when she said:

Ariana: And then... so I had to write a sorry note but I said something at the end of it, because she didn't like me and I don't like her either. And then that's when I ended up here [at the PRU].

I have interpreted Ariana's conversation on this topic to mean that she attributes her difficult relationship with a teacher to her behaviours that subsequently resulted in her permanent exclusion from mainstream education. Ariana's tone of voice whilst she spoke about this particular relationship indicated that she continued to feel annoyed about how this negative relationship impacted her school experience. As well as the direct impact that negative relationships with school staff can have on their school experiences two of the participants also discussed feeling that they had a lack of adult relationships. Lily perhaps best describes this when she said:

Lily: So I wish there was people there who would understand what you're actually like and they would listen to what you were saying.

Lily felt that, during her time in mainstream secondary schools, there were no adults who understood her and with whom that she could develop relationships. This lack of adult relationships in her mainstream school noted by Lily was perceived negatively, however, not all the relationships in mainstream secondary school were perceived negatively. The young people also spoke about the positive relationships they had had with some school staff. These relationships included staff from both mainstream secondary schools and in the PRU. Ariana explained that an important relationship for her had been with her old mentor from mainstream school:

Ariana: Because I prefer my old mentor, because me and her... she understands like what I'm going through and all that.

Ariana's tone of voice softened when she spoke about this mentor. This was in direct contrast to her earlier tone of annoyance when she had described a teacher she had had a negative relationship with. Ariana's mentor was the only adult she described having a positive relationship with and she explained how this was a difficult relationship to replace when her mentor left the school. It appeared, from this conversation and Ariana's tone of voice, that this relationship had been important to Ariana. It was also apparent from the interviews that the young people perceived being understood by adults and being listened to by adults to be important factors that helped them to develop positive relationships with school staff. This can be seen in Ariana's quote about her mentor and how she valued this relationship because she felt her mentor understood her.

The DfE (2018) identified poor relationships between teachers and students as a risk factor that impacts on young people's education, mental health and development of resilience. These conclusions support the findings of this doctoral research that negative relationships with school staff had a negative impact on the young people's experiences in education. Cosma and Soni (2019) also identified, in their literature review exploring the experiences of young people with SEMH needs, the significant impact both positive and negative relationships with adults had for young people. They found that young people attributed negative relationships with school staff as a factor that contributed to their behavioural responses (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Clarke et al (2011) also concluded, from their research with young people attending an SEMH specialist school, that teachers failure to listen to young people led to them feeling discriminated against and was linked to increased fighting in school (Clarke et al, 2011). This supports the findings from this present research in which Ariana associated her behaviour and consequently her permanent exclusion to a difficult relationship with a teacher in school. In turn

this finding demonstrates the significant impact negative relationships with teachers can have on young people's experiences in education.

A research study by Nind et al (2012) found that young people with SEMH needs connected their negative relationships with school staff to their mainstream school and described improved relationships with staff in their specialist provision. This contrasts the findings of this present research as the young people described positive relationships with staff in their mainstream schools and PRU. The young people who participated in research by Nind et al (2012) did however describe how being listened to and understood by teachers was important to them. This is synonymous with the findings from this doctoral thesis. Furthermore, positive relationships with teachers have been found to help young people with SEMH needs to feel motivated, understood and supported (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Sheffield and Morgan (2017) completed this research with participants attending a mainstream school indicating, similar to the findings of this doctoral research, that positive adult relationships exist for young people in mainstream and alternative education settings.

The importance of relationships with adults is also highlighted in the existing literature that explores the perceptions of young people growing up in poverty (Thiele et al, 2016). Thiele et al (2016) found that students attending a prestigious university identified support from teachers as being influential in their decision to attend higher education. Resilience literature also indicates that positive relationships are crucial to young people's development of resilience, to help them be successful and have a sense of belonging in school (Rutter, 2013). Therefore, overall the existing literature supports the findings from this doctoral research that positive relationships with school staff help young people to be successful in education and difficult relationships negatively impact their school experiences. In particular, feeling listened to and understood by adults helps young people to develop these relationships. When these positive relationships are in place they can act as protective factors that can help young people succeed in education, however, conversely when pupils and teachers have a negative relationship it can escalate young people's SEMH needs.

Subtheme 4b: Peer relationships

As well as talking about adult relationships the young people discussed their experiences of peer relationships. In a similar way to their relationships with adults the young people felt that peer relationships could be both positive and negative. Two of the young people also described the impact of feeling they had a lack of peer relationships. First, I will consider the young people's views about having

a lack of peer relationships. Jade summarised this when she was thinking about why she had found some aspects of primary school difficult. During her reflection she said:

Jade: I guess I never really talked to anyone. I had a couple of friends but we didn't really hang out that much.

Although later in her interview Jade expressed a feeling of ambivalence towards her lack of peer relationships in primary school other young people indicated that a lack of peer relationships impacted their sense of belonging in school. Similarly, having positive peer relationships helped the young people to develop their sense of belonging in a school. This was particularly important when they moved to a new school. Ariana spoke about how peer relationships helped her following her managed move, permanent exclusion and respective school moves:

Ariana: I knew most people from places so when I moved I just normally talk to them and talk to them more and, like, I like hang around with them and become best mates. 'Cause I'd just go to them and be like "I've seen you before" and then we'd just chat, chat, chat.

Despite the positive influence of peer relationships three of the young people also spoke about the impact of negative peer relationships. For these young people, they felt their peer relationships directly impacted their behaviour in school and also their development of SEMH needs. Bob felt his peer relationships had negatively impacted his behaviour and that he had changed his behaviour as a direct result of these relationships:

Bob: That's when I started kind of changing because I was copying my friends and that.

The importance of young people's relationships with their peers has also been highlighted throughout the literature that explores the experiences of young people with SEMH needs (Nind et al, 2012) and the literature that explores the experiences of young people growing up in poverty (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013). Siraj-Blatchford et al (2013) concluded that friendship groups could act as a protective factor for children living in poverty and help them to succeed in school. Building on this further, Nind et al (2012) concluded that positive relationships could help young people with SEMH needs to develop a sense of belonging in school. The young people in this present research study spoke about how positive peer relationships helped them during their transitions to new schools. Therefore, considering this finding in relation to the existing literature it indicates that, for some of the young people in this present research,

their positive peer relationships may have acted as a protective factor that minimised the impact of their school moves and helped them to have a sense of belonging in a new school environment.

As well as the positive impact of peer relationships the young people who participated in this doctoral research also discussed the negative impact they felt some peer relationships had for them. Bob, Ariana and Jade linked some of their SEMH needs to their peer relationships. These young people felt that some of the challenging behaviours they displayed in school were directly connected to their peer relationships. Jalali and Morgan (2017) found that young people, with SEMH needs, attending a PRU attributed their challenging behaviours to external factors. This is similar to the findings of this doctoral research because young people were attributing their behaviour to their relationships with peers rather than accepting ownership of their behaviours. Caslin (2019) also found that frustration with teachers, relationships with parents and home events were also all identified by young people, in research interviews, as antecedents for their behaviour. Although these studies do not directly compare to the findings of this present research study in which young people attributed their behaviour to their relationships with peers, the existing literature does indicate that young people attributing behaviour to external factors, in particular relationships with others has previously been found in research.

Considering the influence of negative peer relationships more specifically, Facey et al (2021) found that the three young people with SEMH needs, attending a PRU, who were interviewed, attributed their behaviour and subsequent permanent exclusion to experiences of bullying. These findings relate to this present research study as the young people were directly attributing blame onto their peers for their SEMH difficulties. Slack (2014) also found that the decisions made by young people from deprived backgrounds in relation to their post-16 education were influenced by the decisions their peers made. These research studies perhaps highlight the impact young people's peer relationships can have on their behaviour and the decisions they make. Further to this, the DfE (2018) identified that a break down in peer relationships, a lack of peer relationships and peer pressure are all risk factors for young people that can hinder their experiences in education and in developing resilience. The young people in this present research study spoke about how they felt they often made negative behavioural choices to fit in with their peer group which supports the DfE's (2018) risk factor of peer pressure and the negative implications this can have. The young people also spoke about the negative implications of a lack of peer relationships and how that can impact their school experience.

Overall, the research findings indicated that peer relationships were important for the young people to feel a sense of belonging in school and helped to reduce the emotional demands of transitioning to a

new school. Conversely, a lack of peer relationships could have a negative impact on young people's emotional wellbeing and peer relationships could also be attributed to behavioural changes for the young people and related to negative experiences. In relation to the research questions therefore peer relationships have directly impacted the young people's experiences of education and can be attributed to both helping and hindering them in school.

Theme 4 Summary

Literature discussing the psychological theory of resilience highlights how relationships can provide the basis that supports young people to adapt, recover from difficulties and settle into learning (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). This indicates, therefore, that for young people who experience negative or challenging relationships with their peers or school staff their school experiences may be hindered. These conclusions support the findings of this present research study. Reflecting on the theme 'relationships' overall, the findings from this present research indicate that positive relationships with both adults and peers can act as a protective factor that helps young people have a positive experience in school. However, difficult relationships can have a detrimental impact for young people. These research findings are supported by the existing literature exploring the perceptions of young people with SEMH needs (Nind et al, 2012) and young people living in poverty (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2013). In this present research young people felt that difficult or a lack of relationships hindered their sense of belonging in school and influenced or escalated their SEMH needs. In contrast positive relationships helped young people to develop a sense of belonging in new schools and cope with the emotional impact of transitions. Therefore, depending on the quality of these relationships they can act as a risk or protective factor in young people's development of resilience.

Theme 5: Affective Factors

The theme of affective factors relates to the emotions and attitudes the young people spoke about that influenced their experiences of education. This theme has been broken down into three subthemes. These subthemes are 'attitudes about school', 'self-image' and 'high aspirations'. Figure 6 is a visual representation of this theme and related subthemes. I will begin by discussing the subtheme 'attitudes about school'.

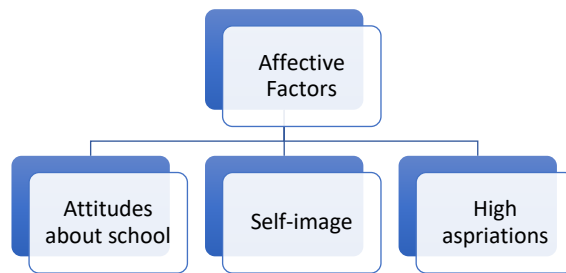


Figure 10: Visual representation of Theme 5 and related subthemes

Subtheme 5a: Attitudes about school

Throughout the interviews it was apparent that the young people’s attitudes towards school influenced their behaviour and actions in school. Two of the young people demonstrated a negative attitude towards school and spoke about how this attitude impacted the way they acted. Jade was reflecting on how she felt about school and said:

Jade: I didn't listen. I don't really care. Yeah I don't like it.

She felt that because she did not like school she did not want to listen to the teachers. In contrast to this, Lily and Bob spoke about how their attitudes towards school have changed overtime. When Lily was speaking about her future and the things she felt might help her to achieve her goals in college she said:

Lily: Just like a positive mindset.

Lily’s view, that a positive mindset would help her to achieve in college, marries up with Jade’s view that how she feels about school impacts on her behaviour, indicating that the young people’s attitudes were, and continue to be, a factor that impacted on their school experiences. In her research Slack (2014) interviewed young people accessing post-16 education who were from low socio-economic backgrounds. The research concluded that young people’s attitudes towards education impacted their future decisions post-16. The young people interviewed who felt positively about school chose to remain in further education whereas those who disliked school chose alternative routes. The findings from Slack (2014) support the conclusions drawn from this present research study that young people’s attitudes towards education has the potential to significantly impact their educational experiences. In relation to the research questions therefore, it appears that a positive attitude about school can help young people succeed whereas a negative attitude can hinder them.

Subtheme 5b: Self-image

As well as a change in attitudes about school some young people spoke about a change in their own self-image. Young people felt that following their move to the PRU and after receiving the right support they had changed their perceptions about themselves. An example of this change in self-image can be seen in Lily's interview. Lily explained that when she was attending mainstream secondary school she viewed herself as naughty:

Lily: No, I did just generally think I was a naughty kid and that's how I liked it. I just thought that was it.

However, following her move to the PRU, where she felt she received the support she needed, Lily's self-image had changed:

Lily: I feel a lot better about myself... So I know that there's nothing wrong with me now... like yeah.

Jade also spoke about a change in her self-image and reflected on the impact that had had for her emotional wellbeing. She summarised this by saying:

Jade: I'm happy now and that's really all that matters.

Bob reflected on how difficult it can be to sustain these changes overtime without support. He had previously attempted to change his self-image and his behaviours but had found this was difficult to maintain:

Bob: Yeah, well, I just tried to get everything done and I just tried to stay out of trouble but it didn't really work out after a little while of it.

When Bob felt he received the right support in school he found it easier to maintain these changes to his self-image and behaviour. Sheffield and Morgan (2017) supported these findings with their research interviewing young people with SEMH needs attending mainstream secondary schools. They similarly found that young people's attitudes and how they view themselves could change (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). The young people interviewed in the research by Sheffield and Morgan (2017) were able to reflect on how they have changed as people and their sense of becoming a different person was something they were proud to reflect on (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). This research supports the findings from this doctoral thesis that although young people's attitudes towards school may impact their

decision making long term there is a possibility for their self-image and related attitudes to change with the right support. Additionally, Bomber and Hughes (2013) concluded that affective factors such as having high self-esteem and a sense of identity were factors that helped young people to develop resilience. This indicates that for the young people who participated in this research having a positive self-image may have helped them to develop resilience. Overall, therefore the young people's change in self-image was something that positively impacted their education and was a factor that they felt has helped them to succeed.

Subtheme 5c: High aspirations

The interviews ended with the young people being asked to describe their hopes, dreams and future goals. The young people all had high aspirations for what they wanted to do beyond Year 11 and how they viewed adulthood. These aspirations included short-term goals, such as doing a college course relating to their interests, and also long-term goals including career aspirations, places they would like to live and what they would like to buy when they earn their own money. All the young people shared these high aspirations, but Ariana perhaps captured them best in her interview. Ariana was in Year 11 and preparing for college when she was interviewed. She spoke about her long-term and short-term goals for the future:

Ariana: Well, for college, I'm gonna do bricklaying, 'cause like when I have my own bit of land when I'm like grown up I'd like to put something there. Like I could build a house or something. And then, like, if I pass my college, I am going to become a vet so I could help. Like I could do surgery on animals, 'cause, like, they do pretty good money there so I could obviously get a house and have enough money to buy a few animals and a car.

All the young people interviewed in this doctoral research discussed high aspirations for the future. These findings support the conclusions drawn in research by Frostick et al (2015). In their research Frostick et al (2015) conducted a survey exploring the aspirations of adolescents, aged between 11-16 years old, from an area of high deprivation. Their research concluded that no significant difference was found between family income and young people's aspirations in school or about their future careers. In line with these findings the aspirations of the young people in this present research study did not appear to be impacted by the barriers they have faced either with their SEMH needs or experiences of poverty. Frostick et al (2015) did, however, find that young people living in high deprivation were significantly less likely to aspire to go to university. Furthermore, Frostick et al (2015) identified a range of variables that included peer relationships, conduct at school, parental support and emotional wellbeing that also

impacted young people's aspirations. This contrasts the findings of my own doctoral research because although they did not directly discuss attending university the young people did discuss wanting to pursue careers that required university level education such as becoming a nurse or vet. It is unclear from the interview data, however, if the young people understood the level of education required for their chosen careers or not. Moreover, the young people in this present research study also discussed experiencing difficulties with peer relationships, conduct at school and emotional wellbeing however these challenges did not appear to impact their high aspirations for the future. The findings indicate that the young people who participated in this research held high aspirations despite the challenges they faced in their education.

Theme 5 Summary

Reviewing the existing literature in relation to the findings from this doctoral research it appears that affective factors can impact young people's decision making and potentially have long lasting impacts. However, young people can continue to hold high aspirations despite facing challenges in their education. Furthermore, with the right support in school young people are able to make positive changes in their attitudes and self-image. Considering the theme 'affective factors' and the conclusions drawn in relation to the research questions the findings indicate that young people's affective factors can influence their school experiences and hinder them in their education. Nevertheless, with the right support in place affective factors can act as a protective factor that help young people in school.

Theme 6: Intersectionality

The final theme identified in this research was intersectionality. This theme relates to the intersection of SEMH needs and poverty. All the young people interviewed had been identified as having SEMH needs and were also identified as living in poverty due to their eligibility for free school meals. Additionally, all the young people were aware of their SEMH needs and that they received free school meals. As it is outlined in Chapter 3, I decided to use the term "free school meals", rather than "poverty", during the interviews. The young people's responses therefore reflect that language choice. The young people had very differing views in relation to intersectionality, which made it difficult to group their individual perspectives together. As a result no subthemes were identified.

All the young people showed an understanding of their own SEMH needs and the impact these difficulties had on their school experiences. The young people gave multiple examples of times their behaviours resulting from their SEMH needs acted as potential barriers to them achieving their potential in school. Ariana discussed her understanding of her own SEMH needs by saying:

Ariana: But I do have like emotional needs, like a temper so like I would say stuff that I won't mean sometimes... but the teachers already knew this so obviously I said something horrible to the Head of Year or the Head of School.

In this example Ariana was explaining how her SEMH needs resulted in her saying something she did not mean to a senior member of school staff. Lily took her reflections regarding her SEMH needs further when she spoke about how the PRU helped her to realise that she was not 'naughty' but instead needed help to overcome a difficulty:

Lily: They talked to me and just made me know that I wasn't like naughty or anything and there was an issue there and they help me resolve that.

Previous literature exploring the perspectives of a similar population sample of secondary aged young people attending a PRU comparably found that young people identified their own behaviour as a barrier to their education (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). These research findings, along with the findings from this doctoral research, indicate that young people with SEMH needs are aware of their own needs and the challenges that present as a result of these needs (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Literature has also discussed that young people are at increased risk of displaying challenging behaviour in school if they experience multiple risk factors in their lives (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). The young people in this doctoral research's experiences of poverty and SEMH needs are also contributing risk factors which together are likely to increase the likelihood they may display challenging behaviour in school (Cefai et al, 2008).

Although the young people were able to reflect on their understanding of having SEMH needs, considering the intersection of their SEMH needs and experiences of poverty was difficult for them. Two of the young people, in particular, found the ideas relating to intersectionality difficult to understand. To explore perceptions relating to intersectionality the young people were asked whether they felt their experiences in school, as a student with SEMH needs, differed from their peers with SEMH needs because they also received free school meals. They were also asked what advice they might give to someone who had SEMH needs and also received free school meals. When Jade was asked questions relating to this topic she spoke only about her experiences of food and school dinners in school. I have interpreted her answers to mean that she did not understand the question or perhaps did not understand why she received free school meals. Ariana also struggled to understand the questions relating to intersectionality and articulated this saying:

Ariana: Umm, I don't really understand.

Despite being initially confused by the questions later in her interview Ariana discussed how she felt that being a young person who received free school meals had no impact on her school experience. This was following a prompting question in which Ariana was asked whether she felt she received the same support as her peers with SEMH needs or if this differed because she also received free school meals. Ariana felt she was the same as other young people with SEMH needs and felt that everyone with SEMH needs was treated in the same way:

Ariana: No, I think everyone gets the same support really.

This view is similar to Bob's perspective. He did not view his experiences of receiving free school meals to be connected to his SEMH needs. He was also clear that he did not feel support in school should be any different for young people with SEMH needs who receive free school meals and young people with SEMH needs who do not. Bob's perspective was that support in school should be based around an individual person and their needs. He explained that he felt support in school should not be decided because a young person was labelled as being a young person who received free school meals:

Bob: I feel like if you do need help then I guess they should put it out there for you but it shouldn't be anything to do with whether you get free dinners.

This view, however, was contrasted by Lily's response. Lily was the only young person who spoke about a connection between receiving free school meals and her own SEMH needs. In her interview she explained that young people with SEMH needs who also receive free school meals are entitled to more support in school. Lily viewed this as a benefit and felt it was important this was in place for young people who experienced both vulnerabilities:

Lily: Yeah, it means you get extra help I think and it makes you feel a lot better to know you've got that extra support or an extra person there to help you. I like... with the free school meals it's just, it is better.

The theme of intersectionality represents the wide-ranging views of the young people who participated in this research in relation to the intersection of SEMH needs and poverty. Research has repeatedly identified the link between young people experiencing SEMH needs and poverty (Shaw et al, 2016).

Furthermore, the existing literature has identified that young people who experience both SEMH needs and poverty are likely to face negative school experiences such as performing lower academically than their peers, experiencing emotional wellbeing difficulties and having higher rates of exclusions (Shaw et al, 2016). These findings may be reflective of the young people who participated in this present research study because all the young people had previously experienced one or more permanent exclusions. However, as all the participants were recruited from the same PRU and one of the main reasons for attending a PRU is permanent exclusion from mainstream education this is not a surprising finding (DfE, 2015). Nevertheless, during the recruitment of participants mainstream, specialist and alternative educational provisions were contacted. It is interesting to reflect that it was a PRU who chose to support the recruitment of this research and that the PRU had a number of students who met the criteria to participate in this present research project. It may be that this supports existing research findings that young people with SEMH needs and who have grown up in poverty are more likely than their peers to be permanently excluded from mainstream education however this cannot be concluded with certainty (Shaw et al, 2016).

Two of the young people who participated in this present research study found the topic of intersectionality difficult to understand and speak about. Jade appeared not to understand why she received free school meals which in turn made it difficult for her to consider the impact of that on her education. Ariana also experienced difficulties understanding the topic of intersectionality and openly voiced that she did not understand the questions relating to this. It appears that multiple factors impacted the young people's understanding. Firstly, there is a question over the young people's understanding of why they receive free school meals, which in turn would impact their understanding of intersectionality. Furthermore, it appeared that the young people did not associate poverty or their experiences of receiving free school meals with their own identity. None of the young people spoke in detail about their experiences of poverty. In contrast, throughout their interviews it was apparent that all four young people viewed their SEMH needs as a significant aspect of their identity and they voluntarily spoke about this at length.

During my literature search I did not identify any literature exploring the perceptions of young people with SEMH needs who also lived in poverty. As a result direct comparisons from the findings from this doctoral research and existing literature is not possible to do. However, intersectionality literature states that due to the complex nature of the theory, unpicking how different factors may interrelate and reflecting on how these impact individual experiences is challenging (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016).

Therefore, for young people living with this intersection it is an understandably complex topic particularly if the young people do not associate poverty with their own identity. Despite these difficulties both Bob and Lily demonstrated an understanding of the questions relating to intersectionality. However, they had opposing views about how their SEMH needs and experiences of poverty impacted on their school experience. These findings perhaps indicate the complexities of intersectionality. In particular how individual experiences and perspectives of intersectionality can vary greatly which in turn impacts the educational experiences of these young people.

Receiving additional support as a student who receives free school meals was the final factor identified by one young person in this present research to have helped her in school. Lily felt this experience helped to her to develop and be successful in school. Furthermore, her advice to other young people was to ensure they received this support as she felt she had not previously been aware it was available. It may be the case that the other young people who participated in the research were not aware of the support they may be entitled to as a result of them receiving free school meals. However, that conclusion cannot be confirmed from the research findings. Despite this, for Lily this additional support was felt to be beneficial although Lily was not sure what exactly this support included. Existing literature does indicate that feeling supported is another factor that can help young people to develop their own resilience (Lowther, Hall & Underwood, 2018). Therefore, it may be that it was the feeling of being supported that Lily found beneficial to help her to have positive experiences in school.

Theme 6 Summary

Overall, the findings from the theme of 'intersectionality' show the contrasting perspectives of the young people and the complexity of the topic. The research findings indicate that the young people viewed their SEMH needs to be part of their identity; however, it appeared that none of the young people viewed poverty in the same way. For some young people considering the intersection of these two vulnerabilities was a difficult topic to understand and speak about, for others their view was that free school meals and SEMH needs are not connected and for Lily she felt there were benefits that came from the additional support for young people who experienced both vulnerabilities. The contrasting perspectives within this research highlight the complexity of understanding intersectionality and how individual perspectives on this topic can vary.

Risk and Protective Factors Model

In this chapter so far I have outlined the analysis of the data for this doctoral research including the identified themes and discussing these within the context of existing literature. I have also used the

underpinning theories of resilience and intersectionality to support my analysis. The themes 'positive school experiences', 'support', 'transitions', 'relationships', 'affective factors' and 'intersectionality' highlight how the young people who were interviewed experienced school. Furthermore, within these themes factors that were felt to both help and hinder the young people interviewed were identified. This demonstrates the answers to both of the research questions for this doctoral thesis. I will explore how this research answered my research questions in greater depth in my concluding chapter.

The findings from this present research are supported by the existing literature. Most notably the findings align closely to the literature exploring the perceptions of young people with SEMH needs and I have explored this observation in greater depth in my concluding chapter. The findings from this research study also align with much of the literature relating to the psychological theory of resilience. Throughout this analysis chapter I have drawn on resilience literature to highlight this alignment. In Chapter One I explained how resilience theory has found that some experiences, individual and environmental factors can become a risk factor for young people whereas other factors can protect young people and help them to be resilient in the face of challenges (Goldstein & Brooks, 2012). During my analysis of the data I observed that the factors identified in this present research study to help or hinder the young people in school related closely to the model of risk and protective factors within resilience literature (DfE, 2018). Resilience is identified as an important skill in young people's development (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). Young people who are academically and socially resilient are able to navigate everyday problem solving, make effective decisions, build and maintain supportive relationships and work collaboratively with others (Cefai & Cooper, 2008). These skills enable young people to be successful in adulthood and be prepared for the challenges that may arise throughout their lives (Cefai & Cooper, 2008).

Growing up in poverty and experiencing SEMH needs are both identified as risk factors that can negatively impact young people's development of resilience (DfE, 2018). However, research indicates that young people can overcome these risk factors and develop into successful adults if they have protective factors in place to support them (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). As all the young people who participated in this present research have experienced both of these risk factors it is helpful for future practice to consider, from their perspective, which factors contributed to increasing this risk and which factors helped to protect them. Moreover, due to critics of the theory debating the clarity and ambiguity of resilience as a theoretical concept it has been argued that for resilience theory to be purposeful and useful for practice it should be located within a theoretical framework (Goldstein & Brooks, 2012). This

theoretical framework should take into consideration individual, environmental and situational factors that may help to explain the phenomena of resilience (Goldstein & Brooks, 2012). With this in mind, therefore, I have created a model to represent the findings from this present research study in the form of risk and protective factors that may impact young people with SEMH needs who are living in poverty.

The model presented in Table 5, highlights the protective and risk factors identified from this present research study that can impact upon the experiences of young people with SEMH needs who are living in poverty. As this research was focused on young people's experiences of education these protective and risk factors similarly are focused on school. By identifying these risks and the protective factors that can impact these young people, education professionals will be able to consider how to reduce the risks and increase the protective factors. This in turn may help to support these young people in their development of resilience, which will help them to overcome challenges and support them to become successful in education and into adulthood (Toland & Carrigan, 2011).

Protective Factors	Risk Factors
❖ Positive experiences in primary school	❖ Receiving sanctions instead of support
❖ Practical and extra curricula school activities	❖ Not receiving emotional support from adults
❖ Receiving emotional support from adults	❖ Not receiving support when needed during learning activities
❖ Receiving support from adults with academic learning	❖ Not receiving the necessary provision in school
❖ Having provision adapted to meet needs	❖ Multiple school transitions
❖ Being listened to	❖ Permanent exclusion
❖ Positive relationships with school staff	❖ Transition from primary to secondary school
❖ Feeling understood by school staff	❖ Poor or no relationship with school staff
❖ Positive peer relationships	❖ Negative influences from peers or peer pressure
❖ Feeling positive about school	❖ A lack of friends in school
❖ Holding a positive self-image	❖ Negative attitude towards school
❖ High aspirations	❖ Having a negative self-image or perceiving themselves as naughty
❖ Free school meals pupils receiving additional support	❖ Challenging behaviour resulting from Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs

Table 5: A model of the risk and protective factors for young people with SEMH needs living in poverty.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have presented the analysis and findings from this research. I have done this with consideration of the underpinning theories of resilience and intersectionality and by drawing on existing literature to contextualise the identified themes and deepen the analysis of the data. The findings have been categorised in six overarching themes that have then each been broken down into relevant subthemes. I have discussed each individual theme and the related subthemes using quotes from the interview transcripts to support the findings and illustrate the identified themes. I concluded this chapter by presenting a risk and protective factors model developed from the findings of this doctoral research. I will now go on to present the conclusions from this thesis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter Introduction

In this concluding chapter I begin by summarising the findings from this present research study in relation to each research question. I then critically evaluate the research using Yardley's (2000) four quality principles for qualitative research. This will include outlining the strengths and limitations from this doctoral research study. Next, I identify implications for professional practice and future research in the area. The chapter concludes with a reflexive account.

Research Questions and a Summary of the Findings

Research Question One: How do young people with SEMH needs who are also living in poverty and attending a PRU experience school?

The young people who participated in this research identified a number of factors that influenced their experiences of school. Although all the young people were attending a PRU at the time of the interviews, during their interviews they reflected on their school experiences from primary, mainstream secondary and at the PRU. Therefore, the findings discussed cover their educational experiences from all three school environments. The factors identified from the young people's interviews that influenced their education included having positive experiences in school, the support they received, relationships with peers and adults, transitions between different schools and affective factors. Although it was a challenging topic for some of the young people to understand some participants also spoke about how their experiences of intersectionality impacted or did not impact how they experienced school.

It is of importance to note the positive experiences the young people discussed in relation to their school experiences. These included attending primary school and participating in practical or extra-curricula activities. The research reviewed in this thesis, that considered the educational experiences of young people with SEMH needs who are living in poverty, did not outline any positive educational experiences for these young people. Therefore, this finding is significant as it adds a unique contribution additional to the findings presented in the existing literature.

Another interesting observation from this research was that the findings closely aligned with existing literature exploring the perceptions of young people's experiences of SEMH. All the young people openly discussed their SEMH needs and initiated conversations relating to this topic. In contrast, none of the young people openly discussed their experiences of poverty and when asked only Lily identified that her experiences of poverty had impacted on her education. It appeared that the young people who participated in the research viewed their SEMH needs as part of their identity but did not appear to view

their experiences of poverty in the same way. As a result, although similarities can be drawn in some areas, the findings from this doctoral research are not closely related to the literature discussed in Chapter Two that considers the perspectives of young people growing up in poverty. It may be this was because of how the young people viewed these vulnerabilities in relation to their own identity or because they felt their experiences relating to their SEMH needs were most significantly impactful on their education. Alternatively, it may be that the young people did not perceive poverty to impact their experiences. A final consideration is that it was difficult for the young people to understand and reflect on the intersectionality of SEMH and poverty. The young people's responses to questions throughout the interview suggest that how they viewed their own identity was one reason for this alignment to existing literature exploring the views of young people with SEMH needs. Additionally, the questions relating to intersectionality would suggest that the young people's understanding of intersectionality was another influential factor in their responses. Intersectionality literature has discussed how the complexities of intersectionality make it challenging for individuals to unpick the intersection of two characteristics (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Therefore, the difficulties the young people appeared to have understanding intersectionality may have impacted their responses and their understanding of how poverty has impacted their school experiences. Despite the challenges young people may have faced unpicking the intersection of the two identified vulnerabilities they were all able to reflect on their experiences of education and identify multiple factors that impacted on their school experiences both positively and negatively.

Research Question Two: What do these young people feel helps or hinders them in school?

The second research question explored educational experiences in greater depth considering the factors that help and hinder these young people in school. This doctoral research identified a number of factors that the young people perceived to help or hinder them in education. Positive experiences in school including attending primary school and participating in practical or extra curricula activities was the first factor found to help young people in education. Receiving the right support that meets the academic and emotional needs of young people and having provision adapted to support individual needs was another factor that helped them in school. Additionally, having positive relationships with peers and school staff was also a helping factor as is having a positive attitude towards school, holding a positive self-image and having high aspirations for the future. The final positive factor that was identified to help young people was receiving additional support as a young person who is eligible for FSM's.

As well as identifying factors that have helped young people in their education this research has also identified factors that have hindered young people. These include young people not receiving the right support or provision in school and receiving sanctions rather than the support they may need. Having negative or no relationships with adults in school and with their peers was another factor identified to hinder young people. Moreover, experiencing multiple school moves including following a family house move, as a result of a permanent exclusion and the transition from primary school to secondary school was also a hindering factor. Finally, young people's own challenging behaviour as a result of their SEMH needs was a factor that hindered them in their education.

This second research question directly relates to the psychological theory of resilience as outlined in Chapter One. Theories of resilience have identified that young people experience risk factors that can reduce their levels of resilience and protective factors that help to increase their resilience (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). These factors can then help or hinder young people to be successful in their education (Cefai et al, 2008). The findings from this present research aligned closely with this model presented in resilience literature. I have considered how this alignment with the literature indicates that many of the factors identified in this research, as things that helped or hindered young people, could also be considered in a resilience framework. Within a resilience framework these factors would be considered to be risk or protective factors in young people's development of resilience. To explore this further I have developed a model of the risk and protective factors identified in this present research study. This model is presented in Chapter Four (Table 5).

Critical Evaluation of the Research

This doctoral research will be critically evaluated considering both the strengths and limitations using Yardley's (2000) principles for qualitative research. I begin by explaining my decision to use Yardley's (2000) principles for qualitative research. Then I discuss the strengths and limitations of this present research study within the context of Yardley's (2000) four principles.

Quality Assurance

Clarke and Braun (2013) have highlighted that, when completing qualitative research, the approaches most commonly used to assess quality in quantitative research are not appropriate. Typically, assessing quality may include evaluating the reliability, validity and generalisability of a piece of research (Clarke & Braun, 2013). However, the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this research are that knowledge is constructed through individual experience and is subjective. Furthermore, the interest of

this research is the rich details of individual experience and, therefore, concepts such as generalisability, in the traditional sense of comparable data, are not relevant to this research (Smith, 2018).

To ensure quality, therefore, I have chosen to use Yardley's (2000) structure of assessing qualitative research. This includes four areas of focus for qualitative researchers. The first area is sensitivity to the context and to the data (Yardley, 2000). I demonstrated this throughout my interviews respecting the individual context and perspectives of the young people. I also demonstrated this through my data analysis, minimising the risk of imposing my own pre-existing constructs onto the research by discussing my data analysis through with my supervisor. The second focus for quality assurance is commitment and rigour in the research (Yardley, 2000). This is demonstrated by the detailed data analysis structure employed to interpret the data. Transparency is the third concept indicating that the research should demonstrate a clear outline of how the interpretation was derived (Yardley, 2000). The details of this methodology chapter aimed to transparently outline the processes involved in this research allowing the reader to understand how the findings were achieved. Finally, Yardley (2000) discussed importance as a key focus for qualitative research in terms of the practical use of the research, ability to generate new hypotheses following the research and shaping new understanding. It is my hope that my research has an impact across all three levels of importance as outlined by Yardley (2000). I will now critically review how my research achieved each of these four principles discussing the strengths and limitations of the research.

Sensitivity to Context

The first principle outlined by Yardley (2000) as being important for developing high quality qualitative research is sensitivity to context. In this doctoral research I have demonstrated sensitivity to the context on multiple occasions. First, Yardley (2000) discusses the importance of a qualitative researcher's awareness and interpretation of the relevant existing literature. In Chapter Two I have presented my literature review exploring and critiquing the literature relevant to this research topic. I completed this literature review using systematic principles to enable me to feel confident that a large breadth of relevant research was reviewed.

As I outlined in Chapter Three, I also demonstrated sensitivity to the context during my interviews with the young people. Due to the research topic all the young people who participated were living in poverty and experiencing SEMH needs at the time of the research. To remain sensitive to these factors I planned my research methods with careful consideration of evidence based research practice. I used creative methodologies to support the facilitation of semi-structured interviews, specifically a timeline

approach, as researchers had previously concluded this method was suitable for helping young people with SEMH needs to have their views heard in an interview (O'Connor et al, 2011). Furthermore, as with any research involving young people I was aware of the possible power imbalance that could exist between the young people who participated and the researcher (Greene & Hogan, 2012). However, research has found that using visual creative approaches can help to reduce this power imbalance (Stirling, 2015). This was done in my research by allowing the young people to decide and have control over what they drew on their timeline. For these reasons, therefore, my research methods indicate how I was able to approach the context of the research with sensitivity.

Additionally, to minimise the potential power imbalance and help the participants feel comfortable during the interviews I virtually met with all the young people a week prior to the interviews. This was an informal meeting to build rapport, allow participants to ask questions and to help them feel comfortable. However, as with all research there were limitations of this doctoral research. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic measures were put in place to ensure both researcher and participant safety. Therefore, all the interviews and meetings with participants were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. I felt that the virtual nature of these meetings added an additional barrier when attempting to make young people feel comfortable during their rapport building sessions and overall acted as a limitation to the research. Despite this challenge, however, having an initial rapport building meeting appeared to help minimise the impact of virtual interviews. The young people were notably more comfortable in their body language and more open in their conversations when we met a second time. The initial rapport building session along with the decision to allow the young people to have a familiar adult present for the interviews appeared to help minimise the impact of virtual interviews.

Yardley (2000) also discussed how language is important in enabling a researcher to understand an individual's context. All the young people who participated were able to express themselves through language, however, two participants found it difficult to understand the language used in the interview questions relating to intersectionality. All the participants also appeared tentative in answering questions relating to this topic, perhaps indicating they found it hard to put into words how they experience the intersection of SEMH and poverty. For one young person I also questioned her understanding of the phrase 'free school meals' as she appeared to not understand why she received free school meals. This difficulty to understand the language used and verbalise responses to questions relating to intersectionality may have had implications for the research. However, this research was able

to highlight that for the young people who participated understanding and explaining their experiences of intersectionality is challenging which in itself is a unique finding.

Commitment and Rigour

The second principle discussed by Yardley (2000) is commitment and rigour which relates to the data collection, analysis and reporting. Yardley (2000) describes commitment as engagement in the research over a prolonged period of time. This present research was completed as part of a doctoral qualification therefore it evidences in itself the length of time committed to the research project. Furthermore, by meeting the young people on more than one occasion I have demonstrated my commitment to the research, doing what is necessary to be ethical in my practice by providing the young people with an initial opportunity to build rapport.

Rigour describes the completeness of the data collection and analysis approaches, which I was able to demonstrate in Chapters Three and Four (Yardley, 2000). To ensure rigour in my data analysis approach I chose to use Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step structure for thematic analysis. Clarke and Braun (2017) have argued this analysis method can be used as a systematic approach to code, collate and represent themes from a data set. I familiarised myself with the data by transcribing by hand and reading the transcripts through whilst making notes of key themes. I then coded the data and used the codes to collate together overarching themes and subthemes in a thematic map. To minimise the risk of imposing my own pre-existing constructs onto the data I also discussed my data analysis and identified themes with my supervisor as part of the data analysis process. I was then able to define and name the themes before writing up the findings.

A limitation of this research was that I was unable to complete the participatory approaches for data analysis that had originally been planned. I had planned to use participatory approaches to increase the rigour of the data analysis process and to help to ensure that the young people's views were accurately presented in the research findings. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions and recruitment difficulties I was unable to recruit participants until the schools reopened following national school closures. This delayed my data collection. This in turn impacted the participatory approaches because the delays meant the final research meetings, to complete the participatory approaches, clashed with school assessments. Due to the time constraints of the thesis I therefore decided it was not possible to use this approach for data analysis.

Another limitation of the research was the participant sample size and population that I managed to achieve. I had intended to interview young people who had attended different educational provisions.

However, due to difficulties with recruitment this was not possible. Although all the young people were, at the time of being interviewed, attending the same PRU they had all had prior experiences of different mainstream secondary schools. The young people reflected throughout their interviews on all their school experiences, including those before joining the PRU, therefore I was able to draw comparisons in their experiences. I had also initially planned to interview between six-10 participants. Clarke and Braun (2013) wrote that between six-15 interviews was an appropriate quantity of data for qualitative research that uses a thematic analysis approach. However, it is acknowledged that there are no specific rules on sample size and factors such as the usefulness and quality of the data must be considered (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Thematic analysis lends itself to both small and large data samples meaning it remained appropriate as my chosen analysis method despite the smaller sample size (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Furthermore, by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step structure for thematic analysis I was able to draw themes from across the data sample and with a small data sample I was able to spend time completing in depth analysis of the data. Having a small data sample meant I was able to do this and represent young people's views using direct quotes from all the participants. It was important, in my role as researcher, to ensure that the young people's voices were heard and being able to represent quotes from all the participants enabled me to do this. For these reasons I do not feel the research findings were compromised by the small sample size.

Transparency and Coherence

The third principle outlined by Yardley (2000) was transparency and coherence. Yardley (2000) argues that qualitative research should be transparent in how interpretations of the data are reached. I aimed to demonstrate transparency through Chapter Three in which I outlined the processes involved in this research allowing the reader to understand how findings and conclusions were achieved. As already discussed in this chapter I also demonstrated transparency in my interpretations of the data by consulting and discussing the themes with my supervisor during the analysis process. Finally, including direct quotes from the interview transcripts allowed the reader to clearly understand how the findings were reached demonstrating transparency in Chapter Four.

Yardley (2000) also argued that reflexivity is an important component of being a transparent researcher. To be a reflexive researcher one must be aware of how their own views, assumptions and experiences may impact upon their interpretation of the data. To ensure reflexivity in my own practice I have kept a researcher's diary throughout this doctoral research where I have reflected on my decisions as well as my own thoughts and feelings as they have occurred. I have included an extract of my researcher diary

(Appendix C) and a reflexive account within this concluding chapter to provide transparency for the reader about my own thoughts throughout completing this research.

Impact and Importance

The final principle for high quality qualitative research outlined by Yardley (2000) is impact and importance. Perhaps the most straightforward principle, this related to the impact the research has and its usefulness (Yardley, 2000). As I outlined in Chapter Two, research evidence indicates a correlation between young people with SEMH needs and living in poverty (Shaw et al, 2016). I also discussed in Chapter Two the body of existing literature that explores the perceptions of young people with SEMH needs and young people living in poverty. However, during my literature search I did not find any existing literature that explored the perspectives of young people who experience both vulnerabilities. The findings from this research highlight how young people with SEMH needs living in poverty and attending a PRU experience school. As this is an area of limited research, this present research study helps to fill the existing gap in the literature and provides a unique contribution to add to the existing body of literature. This research also provides researchers and education professionals with a greater understanding of a group of young people whose views are not regularly listened to (Cooper, 2006). Furthermore, as well as providing the views of young people this research has identified positive school experiences that young people with SEMH needs living in poverty have had. I have already outlined in this chapter that this is a unique contribution to the research field as the existing literature combining these two vulnerabilities focuses solely on the challenges these young people face in school.

Finally, as part of this doctoral research a model of risk and protective factors has been developed from the findings. The model of risk and protective factors is designed as a practical tool to help education professionals take the findings from this research and make practical changes to support young people. The implications for future practice and research will now be discussed to indicate the impact of this research in further depth.

Summary of critical review of the research

By using Yardley's (2000) four principles for high quality qualitative research I have demonstrated the strengths of this present doctoral research and also highlighted some of the limitations that have arisen. My reflections of these strengths and limitations have informed the next section of this chapter: implications for future research and practice.

Implications

Implications for Professional Practice

It is the aim of this research that understanding the perspective of young people with SEMH needs living in poverty and how they experience school will enable professionals to reflect and develop their own practices. From the findings of this doctoral research some implications arise for schools and education professionals. Although the young people in this research all attended the same PRU during their interviews they reflected on their experiences of mainstream and alternative provisions. The majority of the young people's interviews were focused on their experiences of secondary school. Therefore, I feel the implications from this research are applicable to both mainstream secondary schools and alternative provisions. I will now discuss these implications by first considering the implications for schools and then considering the implications for educational psychologists.

Schools

Education staff can have an important role to play in supporting young people's development of resilience (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). All the protective factors outlined in Table 5 are protective factors that school staff can support students with. Conversely, all the risk factors identified in Table 5 are risk factors that schools can work to avoid. To support the development of resilience in young people with SEMH needs living in poverty I suggest that school staff consider the support they are providing for these young people in line with these identified risk and protective factors.

The findings from this present research study suggest that support and provision should be tailored to the individual needs of the young people. This should include opportunities to participate in practical and extra curricula activities as well as support with academic and emotional needs. It also seems important that any sanctions given to young people should be done so with consideration of their individual needs and be given alongside any necessary emotional support.

As the research findings indicate that transitions between schools are challenging for young people it seems that, when possible, they should be avoided. If pupils are required to move schools, it may be beneficial that school staff work to support this move and help young people to quickly develop a sense of belonging when they are new to a school. This should include fostering positive peer relationships throughout the young people's educational careers and particularly when young people are new to a school.

Another way schools can provide protective factors for these young people is through relationships. Relationships with school staff acted as both a risk and protective factor for the young people. To help

these relationships function in a protective capacity and avoid contributing to the risk factors present in these young people's lives, adults in schools need to develop positive relationships with the young people. This could be done by listening to the views of the young people, showing an understanding of their needs and showing an understanding of the past experiences of these young people.

In addition, schools can also help young people to develop the skills within themselves to manage their affective factors. Supporting young people to develop a positive attitude about school, maintain a positive self-image and have high aspirations for the future could help to do this. Strategies that may help to achieve this include helping young people to have positive experiences in school, avoiding negative labeling language such as 'naughty' and holding high expectations for all young people. This in turn may help to support the development of more protective factors for these young people and support them to be resilient when they are faced with challenges.

A final consideration for schools is to help young people with SEMH needs regulate their emotions and to provide them with alternative outlets in an attempt to avoid challenging behaviours. During the interviews the young people spoke about strategies they found helpful when they needed to calm. Therefore, a first step for schools should be to ask and listen to the young people themselves to identify what support they need to manage their SEMH needs in school.

Educational Psychologists

Resilience theories can have significant implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs) in how they practice and support all young people (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). As an approach it offers EPs a different emphasis and perspective and provides different activities to try in their work (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). This present research study provides a specific outlook on the risk and protective factors at play for young people who are already experiencing the risk factors of having SEMH needs and living in poverty. Furthermore, the findings from this research provide the perspective of young people themselves, which adds to the existing body of literature and fills the gap identified following my literature review. This research can then, therefore, be used to inform and support EPs in their practice when they are working with young people who experience both SEMH needs and who are living in poverty. This is significant as EP's aim to practice using an evidence based approach in their work in accordance with the BPS Code of Ethics (2018).

In practice, EPs can use the risk and protective factors model (Table 5) to consider which factors may be impacting the young people they are working with and which protective factors could be put in place to support them. This framework could be used to inform EP's assessments with young people with SEMH

needs who are living in poverty to identify any risk factors they may be exposed to. Additionally, this framework could support EPs in their consultation work with schools helping schools to consider what protective factors could be put in place to support these young people and consequently what interventions may be required. Educational psychologists, with their understanding of the psychological implications of these risk and protective factors, are also well placed to support schools (Toland & Carrigan, 2011). This could be done by providing training for schools or working at an individual level to help those professionals working directly with these young people to understand how best they can be supported.

Implications for Future Research

This doctoral research has contributed to the limited pool of literature investigating the experiences of young people with SEMH needs living in poverty and has provided a platform for young people's voices to be heard on this topic. As the correlation for these two vulnerabilities has been repeatedly identified (Shaw et al, 2016) I feel that understanding the experiences of these young people is important.

However, the number of young people who participated in this present research study and the fact all the young people attended the same PRU was a limitation. Therefore, an implication for future research would be to conduct similar research with a larger sample size or with young people who attended a range of different educational provisions including mainstream, specialist and alternative provisions.

Another limitation of this present research study was the impact of COVID-19 restrictions meaning all research was conducted virtually. When it is safe to do so, therefore, completing future research in person with young people of similar presenting needs may illuminate interesting findings.

A final consideration for future research is to complete a similar research study with young adults who, when they were in school were identified as having SEMH needs and as living in poverty. The young people in this present research study found it difficult to understand the language around intersectionality and articulate their responses. Therefore, using an older age group of participants who may be more able to reflect on their past experiences rather than speaking about the present might allow for different conversations and interesting findings.

Reflexive account

It has already been noted in this chapter that qualitative research can be shaped by a researcher's individual experiences, assumptions and interpretations (Cohen et al, 2018). Reflexivity can be used as an approach, by researchers, to acknowledge their impact on research by reflecting on their individual biases and their reactions to situations (Willig, 2013). This in turn can provide the reader with insight

into certain decision-making processes (Willig, 2013). It is, therefore, important as a researcher, to acknowledge my impact on this research through a reflexive account. This reflexive account will include my reflections on recruitment of participants, using virtual data collection methods, the findings of the research and young people participating in research.

Reflections on recruitment of participants

Prior to beginning the recruitment for this doctoral research, I was already aware that the sensitive nature of this research topic might have meant that the recruitment of participants would be challenging. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, I had spoken to my supervisor about the increased complexities that might arise, however, as this was an unprecedented event it was difficult to predict what would happen. I had intended to begin recruitment of participants once the schools reopened, following national closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in September 2020. I had not predicted that school staff would be resistant to supporting research. However, several members of school staff expressed concerns about student wellbeing following a period of school closures. I also did not predict the number of pressures schools faced in their attempts to manage COVID-19 regulations which resulted in regularly moving to online working when positive COVID-19 tests were identified in schools and reintegrating young people who had missed education. I persevered in my attempts to recruit, however in January 2021 schools were closed nationally for a second time. Schools were reluctant to support research when the young people were not able to be supervised in a school environment. This significantly impacted my recruitment of participants. I have wondered if the PRU who participated were interested in supporting pupils to take part in research because, unlike most schools, they had not closed. The young people who participated in the research had partially attended school throughout the pandemic because they were identified as vulnerable. Due to the nature of a PRU all of the pupils had been identified as vulnerable and therefore for the majority of students in that setting there were limited impacts to their education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It may have been because of this reason that the setting was willing to facilitate student participation in research.

Another reflection I had around recruitment of participants was the role of gatekeepers. As I mentioned above several schools declined to participate due to concerns around the wellbeing of the young people. However, in these settings it is my understanding that young people, attending the setting, who met the inclusion criteria were not asked if they would like to participate. Instead, the gatekeepers made this decision. I found this frustrating as the very nature of the research was to provide an opportunity for

young people to have their views heard but they were not being consulted. When the PRU did agree to support my research recruitment by sharing information with young people who attended the setting and met the participant inclusion criteria it was easy to recruit. When young people were given the opportunity and asked if they wanted to take part several young people responded that they were happy to participate. This indicated to me that the difficulty with recruitment was getting past the gatekeepers and not recruiting the young people themselves.

Using Virtual Data Collection Methods

I have already outlined in this thesis that due to the restrictions following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic I conducted all my research virtually using Microsoft Teams. This enabled me to continue to complete the research I had planned prior to the outbreak of the pandemic whilst keeping the participants and myself safe. I have discussed in this chapter how I felt the virtual nature of these interviews added an additional barrier for the young people to feel comfortable and relaxed. However, initially it had been my hope that virtual data collection methods may have enabled more young people to participate as some young people may have had a preference for virtual working. As many young people spend time online for pleasure or work I had thought it might be a format they preferred. It had also been my experience in placement that some young people with additional needs were showing a preference for virtual communication. However, during the course of my interviews my participants did not express a preference either way for virtual or in person interviews. It appeared to me that they had become accustomed to virtual working since the outbreak of COVID-19 and therefore found this approach normal. Conversely, I think for myself as a researcher I found it more challenging. I was nervous ahead of the rapport building sessions and unsure how they would work. In my role as a Trainee EP I am often required to build rapport quickly with young people to help them feel comfortable however for these interviews I found this to be more challenging. I think this was partly due to my own nerves about these initial sessions and also due to the virtual nature of these initial meetings. I had concerns around practical arrangements such as Internet connections getting disrupted and recording equipment picking up sound through the laptop. During the initial rapport building session, although the young people chatted and were all happy to continue to participate in the research, I was unsure how comfortable they had felt. However, when we met a second time they were all notably more relaxed. This may have also been because I felt more comfortable having met all the young people once and having experienced how the virtual approaches worked in practice. On reflection, I feel that because the interviews were conducted virtually the initial rapport building session was of increased importance. It

made a significant difference to how comfortable the young people were and how comfortable I was as a researcher during the interviews.

Reflections on the findings

Another reflection I had during the course of this research relates directly to the findings of the research. When completing qualitative research researchers must be mindful of how their own views, opinions and perspectives may influence the research (Cohen et al, 2018). After completing the interviews, I was mindful of my own preconceived ideas of what the young people might have said. It had been my expectation that the young people may have said more about their experiences of living in poverty. All the young people were aware of why they were participating in the research and knew that receiving free school meals was a criterion for participating. They also were all aware prior to completing the research that they had SEMH needs and received free school meals. However, the young people I interviewed chose to focus on their experiences of having SEMH needs and how that impacted their education. Prior to beginning my analysis of my findings, I spoke to my supervisor about how I had felt after completing the research and my surprise that the young people had not spoken in more detail about their experiences of poverty. She reminded me during this conversation that what I had gained was the perspectives of the young people and what I was discussing was my own expectation. It was clear from the data analysis that although it had been my expectation the young people would have spoken about poverty in greater depth instead I found that they did not associate poverty with their own identity. This in itself is an interesting finding, as for these young people, SEMH appeared to be a much more significant aspect of their identities. Having the opportunity to reflect with a supervisor enabled me to step away and think about how my perspectives may have been influencing how I was viewing the interviews. After reflecting in supervision, I felt better able to begin the data analysis focusing on the perspectives of the young people I interviewed rather than my own.

Another reflection I had about the findings of the research was the young people's understanding of free school meals. My decision to use this phrase and avoid the term poverty when interviewing the young people was due to the sensitivity of the topic. Discussing the sensitive topic of poverty was a challenge in my research and I was mindful of the language I used throughout my interviews. I wanted to use a phrase the young people were familiar with and I had concerns about the negative connotations that could exist with the term poverty. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic my priority throughout was to maintain ethical practice however I am also mindful that my language choices will have impacted my research. As I have outlined all the young people were aware that they received free

school meals and three of the young people spoke about whether they felt this label made them different or not from other young people with SEMH needs. However, during the interviews when asked about free school meals one young person discussed the meals she ate in school. This made me wonder if she understood this label. This, in turn led me to consider whether all the young people understood why they received free school meals and what this label means. I also have wondered whether their understanding of this label may have then impacted their responses to some of the questions in the interview. However, despite the understanding or lack of understanding the young people may have had about this label they all demonstrated an ability to discuss their experiences of education that enabled them to have their perspectives heard.

My final reflection about the findings of this research is about the young people's perceptions of the intersection of SEMH and poverty. Intersectionality is a relatively abstract concept that can be difficult to understand and that can be interpreted in many different ways (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Helping the young people to understand the concept of intersectionality was a challenge in this research. In order to do this, I was careful with my language choices and adapted my questions about intersectionality when needed to help make the language more accessible. Additionally, I also checked with each young person to ensure they had understood the questions on this topic. During the interviews with young people I explored their perceptions of intersectionality by asking them if they felt their experiences, as a young person with SEMH needs, was different to their peers who also have SEMH needs because they received free school meals. Two of the young people spoke about not feeling different from their peers. However, I am mindful that the young people were attending a school where 46.3% of the young people were identified as eligible for free school meals. This is in contrast to 20.8%, which is the average percentage of young people eligible for free school meals in schools in England (Gov.UK, 2021b). Therefore, the young people may not have felt different from their peers and may have been less aware of the differences between themselves and their peers because they were attending a school that provided education for a high number of young people living in poverty. It may, therefore, be the case that the young people might have viewed their experiences differently if they had attended a different school. Consequently, as with all qualitative research it will be important that this research data is considered in relation to the context it was collected within.

Young people participating in research

At the end of the interviews all the young people were asked how they found the experience of participating in research. Two young people expressed indifference when they were asked this question.

However, two of the young people spoke positively about their experiences. It was interesting for me to hear what the young people felt they had gained from the experience. Lily explained that she does not often get asked about her school experiences and felt positive about being given an opportunity to reflect by participating in research. She said “ *It’s quite nice to get it out really. I don’t really talk about it so it’s quite nice*”. Research has previously found that for young people who experience SEMH difficulties feeling valued and listened to is important (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). It is my hope that for Lily reflecting and talking about her experiences has helped her to also feel valued and listened to. Similarly, to Lily, Bob felt positive about sharing his experiences. However, in contrast Bob felt positively about his experiences because he was hopeful that, by sharing his experiences, he might help other young people similar to him in the future. He said “*I don’t mind speaking about the experiences of school, it doesn’t affect me really and it’s kind of helping other people so yeah*”. I have reflected on Bob’s perspective that by participating in research he is helping others who may experience similar difficulties to him. I found this a powerful comment to reflect on because as a researcher it is also my hope that the findings from this research can help other young people. On reflection it is my hope that the implications for professional practice can go some way in helping achieve Bob’s goal.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have summarised the findings for each research question for this present research study. I then critically reviewed this doctoral research using Yardley’s (2000) four key principles of conducting high quality qualitative research. Implications for future practice and research were discussed and my reflexive account was presented. I will end with my concluding overall comments for this thesis.

Concluding Comments

The aim of my doctoral research was to explore the educational experiences of young people attending a PRU who have SEMH needs and are living in poverty. A literature review was completed to explore existing literature in this area. The research was then completed using virtual semi-structured interviews supported by creative methodologies to gain the views of young people. The four participants of this research: Lily, Jade, Bob and Ariana all shared their experiences through the interviews and by creating timelines of their educational experiences. Thematic analysis was then used to analyse this data. The views of all four young people were captured in the themes identified. These themes were ‘positive experiences in school’, ‘support’, ‘transitions’, ‘relationships’, ‘affective factors’ and ‘intersectionality’. Direct quotes from the participants and existing literature relating to this research topic were used to

support these themes. The findings indicated that a number of factors contributed to the young people in this research having both positive and negative school experiences. Furthermore, a number of factors were identified through the analysis as factors that helped or hindered these young people in their education. In Chapter Four I discuss the link between the findings of this research and the psychological theory of resilience. This data therefore was well positioned for the development of a risk and protective factors framework to support the development of resilience in young people with SEMH needs who live in poverty. It is hoped Educational Psychologists can use this framework in their practice to improve schools understanding about the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs living in poverty and how to best support them.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature Review Search Strategy

1. Search strategy for literature exploring the views of young people with SEMH needs

Terminology used:

Young Person Terminology	SEMH Terminology	Views
Child*	SEMH	Views
Young person	Social, emotional and mental health	Perspective
Young people	BESD	Voice
Student	Behavioural, emotional, social difficulties	Perceptions
Pupil	Behavioural difficulties	Experiences

Combined database search: Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), British Education Index and Child Development and Adolescent Studies. Search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
Child* or “young person” or “young people” or student or pupil	1,558,414
Views or perspective or voice or perceptions or experiences	621,337
Combine 1 and 2 with ‘and’	421,637
SEMH or “social, emotional and mental health” or BESD or behavioural, emotional, social difficulties or behavioural difficulties	3,551
Combine 3 and 4 with ‘and’	1,068
Limited to 2010-current, academic journals and English language	436
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	13

PsychINFO search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
Child* or young person or young people or student or pupil	1,043,601
Views or perspective or voice or perceptions or experiences	698,186
Combine 1 and 2 with 'and'	195,193
SEMH or social, emotional and mental health or BESD or behavioural, emotional, social difficulties or behavioural difficulties	2,231
Combine 3 and 4 with 'and'	429
Limited to 2010-current, peer reviewed journals and English language	156
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	3

One unpublished thesis was also added following a grey literature search through the University of Bristol's thesis database.

The following papers were identified using this search strategy:

Bagnall, C.L., Fox, C.L. and Skipper, Y. (2021), What emotional-centred challenges do children attending special schools face over primary–secondary school transition?. *J Res Spec Educ Needs*, 21: 156-167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12507>

Caslin, M. (2021), 'They have just given up on me' How pupils labelled with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) experience the process of exclusion from school. *Support for Learning*, 36: 116-132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12341>

Caslin, M. (2019). 'I Have Got Too Much Stuff Wrong with Me' - An Exploration of How Young People Experience the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Label within the Confines of the UK Education System. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, 24(2), 167-180.

Clarke, G., Boorman, G., Nind, M., & Gill Clarke, G. B. a. M. N. (2011). "If they don't listen I shout, and when I shout they listen": hearing the voices of girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. In (Vol. 37, pp. 765-780).

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- O'Riordan, Z. (2015). Building Productive Relationships with Young People with SEBD in Transition: The Role of Identity. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, 20(4), 415-431.
- O'Riordan, Z. (2011) Living in the 'real world': the experiences and support of school-leavers with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 16(3), 303-316
- Sheffield, E. L., & Morgan, G. (2017) . The perceptions and experiences of young people with a BESD/SEMH classification. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 33(1), 50-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1225192>
- Tellis-James, C., & Fox, M. (2016). Positive narratives: The stories young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) tell about their futures. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 32(4), 327-342

2. Search strategy for literature exploring the views of young people living in poverty

Terminology used:

Young Person Terminology	Poverty Terminology	Views Terminology
Child*	Poverty	Views
Young person	Low socioeconomic	Perspective
Young people	Low income	Voice
Student	Free school meals	Perceptions
Pupil	Pupil premium	Experiences
	Disadvantage	

Combined database search: Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), British Education Index and Child Development and Adolescent Studies. Search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
Child* or “young person” or “young people” or student or pupil	1,558,414
Views or perspective or voice or perceptions or experiences	621,337
Combine 1 and 2 with ‘and’	421,637
Poverty or “low socioeconomic” or “low income” or “free school meals” or “pupil premium” or disadvantage	63,275
Combine 3 and 4 with ‘and’	13,684
UK or United Kingdom or Britain or England	329,452
Combine 5 and 6 with ‘and’	1,107
Limited to 2010-current, academic journals and English language	336
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	9

PsychINFO search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
Child* or young person or young people or student or pupil	1,043,601
Views or perspective or voice or perceptions or experiences	698,186
Combine 1 and 2 with 'and'	195,193
Poverty or low socioeconomic or low income or free school meals or pupil premium or disadvantage	62,582
Combine 3 and 4 with 'and'	6,573
UK or United Kingdom or Britain or England	84,355
Combine 5 and 6 with 'and'	189
Limited to 2010-current, peer reviewed journals and English language	86
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	1

One research paper was also added following a grey literature search using Google scholar.

The following papers were identified using this search strategy:

Frostick, C., Phillips, G., Renton, A., & Moore, D. (2015). The Educational and Employment Aspirations of Adolescents from Areas of High Deprivation in London [Article]. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, 45(6), 1126-1140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0347-4>

Knight, A., O'Connell, R., & Brannen, J. (2018). Eating with Friends, Family or Not at All: Young People's Experiences of Food Poverty in the UK [Article]. *Children & Society*, 32(3), 185-194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12264>

Moogan, Y. J. (2011). An Analysis of School Pupils' (with Low Social Economic Status) Perceptions of University, regarding Programmes of Study. *Educational Studies*, 37(1), 1-14.

O'Sullivan, K., Robson, J., & Winters, N. (2019). 'I Feel Like I Have a Disadvantage': How Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students Make the Decision to Study at a Prestigious University. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(9), 1676-1690.

- Ridge, T. (2011). The Everyday Costs of Poverty in Childhood: A Review of Qualitative Research Exploring the Lives and Experiences of Low-Income Children in the UK. In (Vol. 25, pp. 73-84): *Children & Society*.
- Ridge, T. (2017). The 'Go-Between': Low-Income Children Negotiating Relationships of Money and Care with Their Separated Parents [Article]. *Children & Society*, 31(2), 87-97. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12168>
- Shackleton, N., Allen, E., Bevilacqua, L., Viner, R., & Bonell, C. (2018). Associations between Socio-Economic Status (Including School- and Pupil-Level Interactions) and Student Perceptions of School Environment and Health in English Secondary Schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44(5), 748-762.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., Mayo, A., Melhuish, E., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., & Sylva, K. (2013). The Learning Life Course of at "Risk" Children Aged 3-16: Perceptions of Students and Parents about "Succeeding against the Odds". *Scottish Educational Review*, 45(2), 5-17.
- Slack, K. (2014). Intra-Class Differences in the Post-16 Educational Trajectories of Young People from Lower Socioeconomic Groups. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 19(4), 433-449.
- Thiele, T., Pope, D., Singleton, A., Snape, D., & Stanistreet, D. (2017). Experience of disadvantage: The influence of identity on engagement in working class students' educational trajectories to an elite university [Article]. *British Educational Research Journal*, 43(1), 49-67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3251>

3. Search strategy for literature combining SEMH and poverty

Combined database search: Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), British Education Index and Child Development and Adolescent Studies. Search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
SEMH or “social, emotional and mental health” or BESD or behavioural, emotional, social difficulties or behavioural difficulties	3,551
Poverty or “low socioeconomic” or “low income” or “free school meals” or “pupil premium” or disadvantage	63,275
Combine 1 and 2 with ‘and’	117
Limited to 2010-current, peer reviewed journals and English language	60
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	3

PsychINFO search last conducted 01/07/2021:

Search Terms	Total Hits
SEMH or social, emotional and mental health or BESD or behavioural, emotional, social difficulties or behavioural difficulties	2,231
Poverty or low socioeconomic or low income or free school meals or pupil premium or disadvantage	62,582
Combine 1 and 2 with ‘and’	116
Limited to 2010-current, peer reviewed journals and English language	61
Papers remaining after exclusion (following abstract search for relevance)	2

Two papers were added using snowballing methods.

The following papers were identified using this search strategy:

- Ashworth, E. and Humphrey, N. (2020), More than the sum of its parts: Cumulative risk effects on school functioning in middle childhood. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90: 43- 61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12260>
- Cottis, T. (2019). The disabling effects of trauma in a time of austerity: Implications for the practice and theory of child psychotherapy. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 33(3), 159-174.
- Hartas, D. (2011). The ecology of young children's behaviour and social competence: child characteristics, socio-economic factors and parenting. *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(6), 763-783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2011.636226>
- Malcolm, A. (2018). Exclusions and Alternative Provision: Piecing Together the Picture. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, 23(1), 69-80.
- Paget, A., Parker, C., Heron, J., Logan, S., Henley, W., Emond, A., & Ford, T. (2018). Which children and young people are excluded from school? Findings from a large British birth cohort study, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) [Article]. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 44(2), 285-296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12525>
- Piotrowska, P. J., Stride, C. B., Maughan, B., Goodman, R., McCaw, L., & Rowe, R. (2015). Income gradients within child and adolescent antisocial behaviours. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 207(5), 385-391.
- Shaw, B., Bernardes, E., Trethewey, A., & Menzies, L. (2016). *Special educational needs and their links to poverty*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Appendix B: An Extract From the Excel Table of Reviewed Literature

Author	Year	Title	Journal	Methodology	Nationality	Key Points	Implications for Thesis	Critique
Frostick, P	2015	The Educational and	Journal of	Survey of	England	No sig difference in family income and aspirations in s deprivation links to lower aspirations of uni and emotional	Large sample size across several authorities bu	
Knight, O	2018	Eating with Friends, F Children & Semi-struc	England	Discusses the shift in Child Poverty in recent years. Fo	The participants discussed the impact on their social life n Only a sample of three children. Did not directly			
Moogan	2011	An Analysis of School Education: Longitudin	England	Focused on Year 11 FSM pupils understanding of furt	Pupils from low SES are cautious and less aware about HE Very focused piece of research, specific part of l			
O'Sullivan,	2018	I Feel Like I Have a Di-	Studies in	Interviews	England	LSES students are less likely to attend HE. Social econo	The students emphasised the important role schools play	Research was all conducted at Oxford university
Ridge	2011	The Everyday Costs o	Children & Literature	England	The research findings were broken into subsections: e	Research has found that children from low income familie	A review of literature not a direct piece of resea	
Ridge	2017	The 'Go-Between': Lo	Children & Secondary	England	Children experienced anxiety about whether their far	Older children experienced poverty differently to younger	Analysis of old interview data pre 2010 - lots ha:	
Shackleton	2018	Associations between British Ed	Surveys	England	"We found that pupils from less affluent families tend	Demonstrated an impact of poverty on educational experi	Huge sample size of over 6,000.	
Siraj-Blatci	2013	The Learning Life Cou	Scottish E	Interviews	UK	Explored the risk and resiliency factors for families tha	Not the most relevant. Identified that some children do s	Not clear what the risk/protective factors where
Slack	2014	Intra-Class Difference Research i	Interviews	England	YP who went into HE has a more positive attitude tha	School structures influenced post-16 outcomes, friendsh	Post 16 is no longer the age of compulsory scho	
Thiele, Poj	2017	Experience of disadv	British Ed	Interviews	England	"Two main themes emerged from the data: identify a	"This study depicts the interpersonal, environmental and	Research only included YP at university and not

Appendix C: An Extract From the Researcher Diary

17/03/2021

Ahead of the interviews tomorrow I am feeling in equal parts nervous and excited. I am looking forward to hearing the views of the young people and learning more about their experiences. My nerves are mostly around practical difficulties that may arise such as I internet connection, recording equipment failing and also my own confidence and skill as an interviewer. I worry that internet difficulties might disrupt the flow of the interview although I am hoping most of these practical issues will be easier than they were in the rapport building sessions. The young people and I are more experienced this time with the set up which will hopefully help to make the interviews successful.

18/03/2021

I have completed 4 interviews today. The young people were notably more relaxed and open than they had been in the initial rapport building sessions. I am grateful for how much they shared. One young person in particular was very reflective on her experiences of school and I feel that her interview offered a real insight into everything she had been through.

Reflecting on them has brought up quite a lot of feelings for me. I wonder if the young people understood the aspect of the research relating to free school meals. I am unsure on reflection what their understanding of that phrase 'free school meals' is and this may have impacted their answers to the interview questions, however, some of them may have had a clear understanding and not viewed this factor as impactful for them. It is hard for me as a researcher to separate out these two possibilities. I think perhaps for some of the participants this topic was more difficult than for others. Perhaps this is because despite receiving free school meals they do not associate this with their own identities. The young people all focused around their exclusions from school in their interviews. I think this is reflective of the experiences these young people have had. It was clear that this experience has significantly influenced their school experiences as a whole and all the young people felt it was important to discuss.

The interviews have made me consider what my initial expectations were about the interviews. In particular I expected the young people to speak about their experiences of living in poverty or how that impacted school in more detail than they did. I think I need to let go of some of these expectations .I need to accept the young people's perspectives and let go of my own preconceived ideas.

19/03/2021

I've been thinking about the interviews from yesterday. I have been wondering about the impact of virtual interviews and whether that affected how comfortable the young people were to open up and talk about their experiences. All the young people were more comfortable and confident discussing their experiences of SEMH rather than their experiences of being a young person who receives free school meals. This may have been because of the phrasing of the questions. I am still unsure about the young people's understanding of why they receive free

school meals. However, only one young person talked about free school meals impacting the level of support she should receive and she was also the only young person to reflect on how her understanding of her needs has changed over time. Perhaps is significant in explaining her different answers from her peers. I think a future study that may be beneficial is one that explores the views of young adults reflecting on their experiences as perhaps they'd have different perceptions once they have left the education system.

29/04/2021

Today the young people were unable to complete the participatory aspect of the research due to a behavioural incident in the school. As they are now entering the assessment period the school have said it is not possible to complete this final aspect of the research. I feel disappointed about this. I had spent time developing visuals to represent the codes identified in the young people's interviews and it is difficult to know they won't be able to contribute at this point. I do understand the pressures the school are under at this time and due to the age of the young people assessments were always going to need to take priority. I hope that I am able to capture the views of the young people accurately using thematic analysis. A positive is that I am now able to begin theming the findings and completing that next step which I have been looking forward to.

Appendix D: Ethics Form



School for Policy Studies

SPS RESEARCH ETHICS

APPLICATION FORM: STAFF and DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.

See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.

*All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.*

See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.

*Please stick to the word limit provided. **Do not attach** your funding application or research proposal.*

Key project details:

1. **Proposer's Name**
2. **Proposer's Email Address:**
3. **Project Title**

socio-economic background.

4. Project Start Date:

July 2020

End Date:

July 2021

Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere. As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not require a NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) review e.g. does it involve NHS patients, staff or facilities – see <http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/>

If you are not sure where you should apply please discuss it with either the chair of the Committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Social care research projects which involve NHS patients, people who use services or people who lack capacity as research participants need to be reviewed by a Social Care Research Ethics Committee (see <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/social-care-research/>). Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records (without informed consent) must be reviewed by a REC and the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care (NIGB).

Who needs to provide governance approval for this project?

If this project involves access to patients, clients, staff or carers of an NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation, it falls within the scope of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social. You will also need to get written approval from the Research Management Office or equivalent of each NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation.

When you have ethical approval, you will need to complete the research registration form:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/study-notification.html>

Guidance on completing this form can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/guidance.pdf>. Contact the Research Governance team (research-governance@bristol.ac.uk) for guidance on completing this form and if you have any questions about obtaining local approval.

Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer. If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/insurance/travel-insurance/>).

Do you need a Disclosure and Barring Service check?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Criteria for deciding whether you require a DBS check are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

You should specifically look at the frequency, nature, and duration of your contact with potentially vulnerable adults and or children. If your contact is a one-off research interaction, or infrequent contact (for example: 3 contacts over a period of time) you are unlikely to require a check.

If you think you need a DBS check then you should consult the University of Bristol web-page:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/dbs/>

5. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution. Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.

N/A

6. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No/Not yet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work. They will be provided with training and sign a detailed consent form.

7. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor(s).

1st Supervisor – Professor Debbie Watson

2nd Supervisor - Dr Jak Lee

Please confirm that your supervisor(s) has seen this final version of your ethics application?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Who is funding this study?

N/A

If this study is funded by the ESRC or another funder requiring lay representation on the ethics committee and is being undertaken by a member staff, this form should be submitted to the Faculty REC.

Post-graduate students undertaking ESRC funded projects should submit their form to the SPS Research Ethics Committee (SPS REC).

9. Is this application part of a larger proposal?

No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please provide a summary of the larger study and indicate how this application relates to the overall study.

10. Is this proposal a replication of a similar proposal already approved by the SPS REC? Please provide the SPS REC reference number.

No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, please tell us the name of the project, the date approval was given and code (if you have one).

Please describe any differences (such as context) in the current study. If the study is a replication of a previously approved study. Submit these first two pages of the form.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant ethical issues and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or**

proposals which do not directly answer the questions. Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS: Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants

Dulcie Gray:

DEdPsy Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist

BSc – Psychology

Previous research experience:

Undergraduate dissertation investigating the media's representation of the Bipolar Disorder in comparison to the media's representation of Autism Spectrum Condition.

Doctoral research commission exploring the perceptions of staff involved in completing the Gloucestershire Autism Inclusion Quality Mark.

Function in proposed research: Sole researcher, responsible for all the data collection, data analysis and report writing.

STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]: Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

The research aim:

To understand the educational experiences of young people who are identified as having SEMH needs and as being from low socio-economic backgrounds. To understand any risk or protective factors young people identify as supporting or hindering their educational experience.

Research Questions:

How do young people with SEMH needs who are from low socio-economic backgrounds experience school?

What has or do these young people feel helps or hinders them in school?

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

(If you are undertaking secondary data analysis, please proceed to section 11)

RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]: Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

Sample Strategy:

I intend to recruit participants aged between 13-16 years old. All participants will need to have an Education, Health and Care Plan with social emotional and mental health needs identified as their primary area of need and they must be aware of this label. The young people will also need to currently be identified as receiving free school meals and be aware that they receive these.

I will use a convenience sampling strategy to recruit participants. I will begin by contacting all 9 of the secondary schools in the Bridgwater area of Somerset including specialist or alternative provisions. I will email (appendix 1) these schools explaining my research. Within schools SENCOs will hold the data that will indicate if young people meet the inclusion or exclusion criteria therefore they will be the gatekeepers that I will contact in schools. I will email the SENCO the participant information sheets (appendix 2 & 3), consent form (appendix 4) and confidentiality protocol (appendix 5), which they will be able to then share with any young people who meet the criteria if they wish to. If young people express an interest in the research they can contact me directly via my University email or through my local authority phone number. The young people's personal information (e.g. phone number or email address) will only be stored on encrypted devices for contact purposes and will be safely destroyed once the data collection has been completed. If I do not receive enough participants from this approach I will then contact the secondary schools, specialist schools and alternative provisions that support young people with SEMH needs in the Bristol area using the same approach.

If I continue to experience difficulties recruiting participants I will then broaden my criteria to include not only young people with an EHCP but any young person on their schools Special Educational Needs register with social, emotional and mental health needs identified as their primary area of need. The young people must also be aware of this label. All other inclusion criteria will remain the same.

Research Methods:

My research will consist of three virtual meetings with each participant. These meetings will be held virtually via Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams. The first meeting is to build rapport and ensure the young person has understood all elements of the consent form. Participants will provide verbal consent to each statement on the consent form, this will be recorded and transcribed. In the second meeting, I intend to elicit the voices of the young people participating in the research by using a life grid approach, which young people can complete alongside participating in a semi-structured interview. The interview will be audio recorded, transcribed and anonymised. I will use Hart's (1979) Ladder of Participation to inform the participatory approaches I will use. This will involve adult initiated research with young people making shared decisions

about the themes produced from the data. To do this I will conduct a follow up meeting with each participant allowing an opportunity to debrief, share the themes that have been identified in the research and discuss if these themes are reflective of the young people's views. Adaptations to the themes may be made following these discussions. This meeting will also be recorded and transcribed. Participants will be asked to complete all three of these meetings alone but it is asked that a trusted adult is near by if they require emotional support.

EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between March to July 2019. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

Interviewing up to 10 participants. Participants will be required for no longer than 30 minutes for the rapport building session and up to another hour for both the interview and follow up meeting to discuss the identified themes/debrief.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words] Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

The research aims to benefit the young people who participate by giving them an opportunity to have their voices and experiences heard and valued. Participatory approaches will be used to ensure they feel the research has accurately represented their views and that they have been able to communicate these on their terms.

The research may also benefit educational professionals as it aims to develop a resilience model of risk and protective factors that professionals can use to support their work with young people identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs who are also from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The research may benefit the research community as it aims to fill a current gap in literature exploring the views of young people who experience these two vulnerabilities and increase understanding in this area.

POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]: What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example risk assessment form and guidance : <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/RA-gn.pdf> and <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/>

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
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Young people may feel	A rapport building session will be completed with every young
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<p>uncomfortable discussing topics with me during the research.</p>	<p>person to help them feel comfortable.</p>
<p>Potentially sensitive topics maybe addressed regarding the young people's social, emotional and mental health needs.</p>	<p>An information sheet signposting participants to support services will be available for all participants (appendix 6)</p> <p>Young people will be reminded that they have the right to withdraw from the study as a whole or from answering specific questions.</p> <p>The final meeting will allow for a debrief with the young person.</p>
<p>Potentially sensitive topics maybe addressed regarding the young people's home circumstances.</p>	<p>An information sheet will be made that can be shared with the young person's family informing them of what the research involves (appendix 3).</p> <p>Young people will be reminded that they have the right to withdraw from the study as a whole or from answering specific questions.</p> <p>The final meeting will allow for a debrief with the young person.</p>
<p>The young people interviewed may become upset.</p>	<p>If a young person becomes upset the interview will immediately stop and will only be continued if the young person consents. They will be given the option of taking a break and returning or finishing completely. The list of support services would be passed on to the young person before they leave.</p> <p>It will be agreed with the young person that an adult they trust is available in their house or school that they can talk to if they decide they need support.</p>
<p>Participants may make a disclosure regarding their regarding their emotional or physical safety.</p>	<p>I will ensure I am aware of all the schools safeguarding policies. In the event of a disclosure I will talk to the young person about what they have said and inform them if it is decided this information needs to be shared with a safeguarding officer. I will follow the schools safeguarding policies and inform the safeguarding officer. I will also inform my supervisor.</p> <p>I will share the confidentiality protocol with participants and read it to them in the initial rapport building session to ensure they have understood the limits to confidentiality.</p>
<p>Power imbalances between myself as an adult interviewer and children</p>	<p>Rapport building session will be used to help the young person feel comfortable with me.</p> <p>I will also remind children they do not have to take part and if at any time they feel that a participant appears uncomfortable within the process they will be asked if they would still like to continue and withdraw their consent. If they do not wish to continue, I will stop the interview.</p>

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*Add more boxes if needed.

RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]: What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
I will be undertaking interviews alone. There is a potential risk that the young people may display adverse behaviours during the interview.	A colleague will know the start and approximate finish time of the interview. I will contact my colleague after the interview to inform them when it is finished. I will contact my supervisor after the interview if the young people displayed any adverse behaviours to debrief and discuss any difficult emotions.
I may be emotionally affected by something discussed in the interviews.	I will have regular contact with their supervisor to discuss any difficult interviews or emotions. If I feel emotionally affected by an interview I will call my supervisor to discuss what happened and any appropriate next steps. I will also keep a researcher's journal to document any emotional impact.
Safety whilst travelling to schools	I do not foresee any particular risks to me travelling to schools but I will make sure I take a mobile phone with me and inform a family member or friend where I am going and when I am expected to return

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]: How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be "obliged" to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so how will this be dealt with.

Within schools SENCOs will hold the data that will indicate if young people meet the inclusion or exclusion criteria. Therefore, the SENCO or member of school staff that contacts me will become the gatekeeper for this research. I will send the SENCO the participant information sheets and consent forms which they will be able to share with any young people who meet the criteria. If young people express an interest in the research they can contact me directly via my University email or through my local authority phone number. As a member of school staff takes a gatekeeper role in my research it is possible that the young people may feel obliged to participate. To reduce this risk I have ensured that participants are of an age to consent for themselves and therefore can contact me directly if they are interested in the research. Within the participant information sheet (appendix 2) and the consent form (appendix 4) I have outlined that the young people do not need to participate if they do not want to. I will also explain this to the young people in person each time

we meet before beginning our conversations or interview.

INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]: How will this be obtained? Whilst in many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be clearly justified. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate. If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method then additional specific consent should be sought from participants.

All potential participants will be provided with a detailed and accessible information sheet one week before so they can read it carefully and go through it with a family member if they choose to do so (appendix 2). This will be given to them via a member of school staff. The information sheets describe participant inclusion criteria. It will discuss that the research is completely voluntary and interviews will be audio recorded so they can be transcribed and analysed. The information sheet will state that participants are able to ask the researchers any questions they have about the research process. The information sheets will be clear that the research is looking at participants' experiences. It will be clear that information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality unless a concern was raised that the researcher felt put the participant at risk of serious harm. A confidentiality protocol has been produced which will be followed (Appendix 5). During the rapport building session and again at the beginning of the interview session the researcher will ensure that the participant has understood all aspects of the information sheet.

Consent forms will be given to all participants. During the rapport building session the consent form will be read out to the participants and they will provide verbal consent for each aspect of the form. This will then be transcribed. Interviews will only be arranged, following the rapport building session, once the young people have provided verbal consent. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. Participants will be made aware that they are under no obligation to answer any question they may wish not to, and can finish the interview at any point. Prior to beginning the interview the researcher will remind the participants what is involved in the research project and ask participants again if they consent to participating in the research.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms), securely for twenty years.

X

If you intend to use an on-line survey (for example Survey Monkey) you need to ensure that the data will not leave the European Economic Area i.e. be transferred or held on computers in the USA. Online Surveys (formally called Bristol Online Surveys) is fully compliant with UK Data Protection requirements – see <https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>

Please tick the box to confirm that you will not use any on-line survey service based in the USA, China or outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

N/A

DATA PROTECTION: All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation.

University policy is that “personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA”.

Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months?

https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Yes

No

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union?

See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-brexit/data-protection-if-there-s-no-brexit-deal/the-gdpr/international-data-transfers/>

No

Yes

If **YES** please list the country or countries:

Please outline your procedure for data protection. It is University of Bristol policy that interviews must be recorded on an encrypted device. Ideally this should be a University owned encrypted digital recorder (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/transcription/>).

If you lose research data which include personal information or a data breach occurs, you **MUST** notify the University immediately. This means sending an e-mail to data-protection@bristol.ac.uk and telling your Head of School. See additional details at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/data-breaches-and-incidents/>

The UK Data Protection Act (2018) include potential fines of up to €20,000,000 for not protecting personal data – so please provide details about how you plan to ensure the protection of ALL research data which could be used to identify a living person.

I will comply with data protection regulations both of the University of Bristol and of the UK Data Protection Act. All data collected will be stored on the university server and not on a home computer. The interview will be recorded using Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams and also on an encrypted recording device. The data will be uploaded to the university server and deleted of the recording device as soon as possible. All files with the names of the participants or school names will be encrypted and stored on the university server. This information will be stored separately from the codes used to anonymise the data. Transcripts from the interviews will be anonymised. It is preferable that only scanned electronic consent forms are received however if paper consent forms are given to the research they will be stored in a locked cupboard.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	Yes	No
All my data will be stored on a password protected server	X	
I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/)	X	
If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol.	X	
Please tick the box to CONFIRM that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored in a secure storage facility. https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm	X	

Please outline your procedure for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

All potential participants will be provided with a detailed and accessible information sheet. The information sheets describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. It will discuss that the research is completely voluntary. The information sheets will be clear that the research is looking at participants' educational experiences. It will be clear that information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality unless there are safeguarding concerns and this will be made clear to participants.

Consent forms will be given to all participants prior to the interview. I will ask that participants have initialled and signed consent once they have had the opportunity to read information regarding data collection, interpretation and dissemination. Before beginning the research the participants will be given the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions they have about the research process. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained and transfer of un-anonymised data will be encrypted. Participants will be made aware that they are under no obligation to answers any question they may wish not to, and can finish the interview at any

point. All names will be reported using pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will also be used for the names of the young people's schools in order to protect their privacy.

All of the information provided by the participants will be treated as confidential and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Specific steps will include: paper consent forms to be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Bristol or encrypted and stored in my OneDrive space on the University of Bristol's server; where necessary participants to be given pseudonyms; pseudonyms list to be stored electronically in password protected files at the University of Bristol this will be kept separate to the named consent forms; digital recordings will be saved in password protected files on the University server.

DATA MANAGEMENT

13 Data Management

It is RCUK and University of Bristol policy that all research data (including qualitative data e.g. interview transcripts, videos, etc.) should be stored in an anonymised format and made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data.bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK Data Archive. What level of future access to your anonymised data will there be:

Open access?

Restricted access - what restrictions?

Closed access - on what grounds?

This raises a number of ethical issues, for example you MUST ensure that consent is requested to allow data to be shared and reused.

Please briefly explain;

How will you obtain specific consent for data preservation and sharing with other researchers?

How will you protect the identity of participants? e.g. how will you anonymise your data for reuse.

How will the data be licensed for reuse? e.g. Do you plan to place any restrictions on the reuse of your data such as Creative Common Share Alike 2.0 licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/>)

Where will you archive your data and metadata for re-use by other researchers?

Participants will be asked via the consent form (Appendix 2) whether they consent for the data to be kept anonymised on the University server and that access to this data will be restricted. This data will be stored on my University One Drive for the duration of my doctoral thesis and then be safely destroyed at the end of my doctorate. If participants consent to the data being archived it will be archived at data.bris.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

14. Secondary Data Analysis

Please briefly explain (if relevant to your research);

What secondary datasets you will use?

Where did you get these data from (e.g. ESRC Data Archive)?

How did you obtain permission to use these data? (e.g. by signing an end user licence)

Do you plan to make derived variables and/or analytical syntax available to other researchers? (e.g. by archiving them on data.bris or at the UK Data Archive)

Where will you store the secondary datasets?

N/A

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS

DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]: Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on? If so, in what format and under what conditions? What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.?

Interview transcriptions will be encrypted and all data collected will be stored securely and safely in OneDrive. The research will use participatory approaches to ensure the young people's voices are accurately represented. Therefore, a follow up meeting will be arranged with all the participants to share the findings of the research and discuss if the young people feel the themes are reflected of their views. Adaptations to the themes may be made following these discussions. Participants will be made aware of this follow up meeting in the participant information sheet and reminded of it prior to starting their initial interview.

The research will be published as part of the researcher's DEd Psy Thesis and it is possible that it may also be written up and published in a research journal. It is hoped that findings will provide insight that may be beneficial to Educational Psychologists and therefore they may be presented to relevant Local Authorities, allowing for open discussion about any implications for practice.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application: Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

Additional Material:	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Participants information sheet (s)	2
Consent form (s)	1
Confidentiality protocol	1
Recruitment letters/posters/leaflets	1
Photo method information sheet	0
Photo method consent form	0
Support information for participant	1
3rd party confidentiality agreement	0

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the Committee will not look at this

SUBMITTING AND REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:

To submit your application you should create a **single Word document** which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email to sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

If you are having problems with this then please contact the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk) to discuss.

Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document. The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document. For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.

Should the Committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly. If the Committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.

Should your research change following approval it is your responsibility to inform the Committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.

Chair: Beth Tarleton (beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk)

Administrator: Hannah Blackman (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk)

Date form updated by SPS REC: January 2019

Appendix E: Initial email to SENCOs

Dear _____,

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist and am currently completing my doctoral research exploring the views of young people with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs who also receive free school meals. My aim is to understand their views about their educational experiences.

Participating in research has been found to be a positive experience for many young people. It can help young people to feel heard and valued. My research will consist of three meetings with the young people. This includes a meeting to build rapport, an interview using creative approaches and an opportunity to debrief and share my findings with the young person. I would aim to create an experience that is as positive as possible for the young person this will include, for example, spending time building rapport to help them feel comfortable. Due to the unprecedented events relating to Coronavirus these interviews will take place over Skype.

My research has been approved by the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee.

The young people I am looking to interview must be:

- Aged 13-16 years old.
- Have SEMH identified as their primary area of need on an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Aware that they are identified as having SEMH needs.
- In receipt of free school meals.

If there are any young people in your school who meet these criteria I would greatly appreciate it if you could discreetly share with them the attached documents. The documents explain the research and how they can express their interest.

If you have any questions about this research please do not hesitate to contact me at vu18419@bristol.ac.uk or my supervisor Professor Debbie Watson debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk.

Many thanks,
Dulcie Gray
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Information Sheet

My name is Dulcie and I am looking for young people to talk to me about their experiences in school.



Dulcie Gray

Email: vu18419@bristol.ac.uk

Phone Number : 07585795574

Why might you have been asked to take part?

- I would like to ask young people who experience social, emotional and mental health needs and who also receive free school meals about their experiences in school. You may have been given this

information sheet because you have experienced these things in school.

What I would like to find out

- I would like to hear about your experiences of preschool, primary school and secondary school.
- I would like to find out about the things that helped you learn and any things that may have made learning difficult for them.



If you're interested this is what we would do...

- If you're interested please email, call or text me to tell me you might like to take part (details above).
- We will then arrange to speak over Zoom or Microsoft Teams. In total we will meet 3 times:



1. The first meeting is a chance to get to know each other and for you to ask me any questions you might have. I will talk to you about your rights in this research and ask you if you consent to take part in the interview. You can change your mind at any point.






2. In the second meeting I will ask you to draw or write on a timeline any important events that might have happened during your time in school.



- I will ask you about preschool, primary school and secondary school.
- I will also ask about the things that helped you learn and any things that may have made learning difficult for you.
- This conversation might last an hour and I will ask if it is OK to record what we say on an audio recorder.

3. In the last meeting I will talk to you about the different things I have learnt from what you have told me. You can tell me if I have understood your views correctly or if there is anything you would like me to change.

Your rights in this research

- If you decide to take part ideally we will speak privately via Skype but you may find it helpful to have a parent, carer or teacher nearby for you to talk to if you want afterwards. 
- You can choose if you want to take part in this research and you can say no if you do not want to. Someone at school may want you to take part in this research, but you can decide for yourself. 
- You can stop at any time in the research and do not have to answer a question if you don't want to. If you get upset or feel uncomfortable we can also stop the activity.
- If you do take part, I will not tell other people your name you will be able to choose another name if you like. 
- I will not play the audio recording to anyone else.
- After our meetings I will save all the data and information securely on the University of Bristol server. No one else will be able to access this.
- The findings from this research might be shared with other people, in the future, so they can learn from it. But your name and the school's name would not be shared. 
- The only time I would need to tell someone else about something you have shared, like a teacher, would be if I think you in danger in some way.
- I will ask you if I can store the data from our meetings after the research has finished. You can say yes or no when I ask you.
- The School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee has 

looked at my project, and agreed for me to go ahead. If you want to ask anyone else about it you can contact my supervisor Professor Debbie Watson at debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk

If you would like to take part please email, call or text me to tell me you're interested.

Appendix G: Consent Form



Exploring the views of young people with social, emotional and mental health needs who also receive free school meals.

Consent form for young people

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please complete this form, write your name and contact details over the page. You can take a photo of it and email it to me with the email below or you can give it to (member of school staff) and they will email it for you:

Email: Dulcie Gray at vu18419@bristol.ac.uk

Please put your initials in the box to say if you agree or not

	Yes	No
1. I have read and understood the information about this research and would like to take part	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I would be happy for the interview to be recorded using	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

an online platform and with an audio recorder.

3. I understand that Dulcie will keep my name
and the name of my school private.

4. I understand that the research findings will
be securely stored after the research has been completed
and may be used to support other research in the future and
may be shared anonymously with other people.

5. I understand that Dulcie may need to tell
someone else if they learn about some harm or
risk of harm that I am facing.

6. I understand that Dulcie will come back to share
the findings of the research with me and I will have the chance
to say if the findings represent my views well or not.

7. If I decide to change my mind at any time about
taking part in this research, I can do so.

8. I understand any data collected may be stored securely
for up to 20 years and may be used in publications and reports.

Name (please print)

School.....

Telephone.....

Email

Signed

Appendix H: Confidentiality Protocol



Confidentiality Protocol

- This research project is designed to understand the views of young people with social, emotional and mental health needs who also receive free school meals.
- Your name and the name of your school will be kept private.
- However, Dulcie may need to tell someone else if they learn about some harm or risk of harm that you may be facing.
- When you agree to take part in this study it is important to be aware of this and that you are still happy to continue.
- If she is concerned then she will talk to you about her concerns first if possible.
- She will then agree whether she needs to tell a member of staff in the school about her concerns.

Appendix I: Parent Information Sheet



Parent Information

You have received this letter because your child has expressed an interest in participating in my doctoral research project. Participating in research has been found to be a positive experience for many young people. It can help young people to feel heard and valued. For my research I am exploring the views of young people with social, emotional and mental health needs who also receive free school meals. My aim is to understand their views about their educational experiences.

I will meet with each young person three times. These meetings will be arranged to take place virtually over Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams.

- The first meeting is a chance to get to know each other and if the young person has any questions they will have time to ask me.
- In the second meeting I will ask the young person to draw or write on a timeline any important events that might have happened during their time in school.
- I will ask them their views about preschool, primary school and secondary school.
- I will also ask about the things that helped them learn and any things that may have made learning difficult for them.
- In the last meeting I will talk to the young person about the different things I have learnt from what they have told me. They will have an opportunity to tell me if I have represented their views correctly or if there is anything they would like me to change.

Young people's rights in this research

- The young people can decide for themselves if they wish to take part.
- If a young person chooses to take part, their name and school will be kept anonymous and all the data collected will be confidential.
- The findings from this research might be shared with other people, in the future, so they can learn from it. However, all the participants' information will be kept confidential and anonymous.
- All the data from the interviews will be stored securely on the University of Bristol server.

- I will ask the young person if they are happy for me to archive the anonymised data from the interview on the University of Bristol server following the completion of the research. The young person can decide for himself or herself if the data is archived.
- I will inform a member of school staff if I have any concerns around the young persons safety or wellbeing.
- The School of Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee has approved this project.

To ensure adequate emotional support I have recommended to all the young people that a parent, carer or teacher be nearby for them to talk to after the interview if they need it. Please could you be available for your young person if they require it either during or after the interview.

If you have any further questions about this research project please contact me at:

Dulcie Gray

Email: vu18419@bristol.ac.uk

Phone Number: 07585795574

If you have any concerns about this research project you can also contact my supervisor at:

Professor Debbie Watson

Email: *debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk*

Appendix J: Interview Topic Guide

1st Session: Rapport Building

<u>Structure</u>	<u>Questions and Prompts</u>
1: I will read the consent form to the young person and check they would still like to take part in the research. I will read out each question on the consent form and ask participants to verbally consent.	‘Thanks for coming and meeting with me today. This session is an opportunity for you to get to know me and for me to explain a bit about the research project. I will start by reading the consent form aloud and checking you are happy to take part. You can say yes or no to the questions as I ask them. I will also remind you of the participant information and what this research is about. If you have any questions please let me know and I will be happy to answer them for you.’
2: I will tell the young people about myself and ask questions about the participants and their interests to build rapport with the participant.	‘How long have you been at X school?’ How old are you?’ ‘What do you enjoy doing when you’re not in school?’ ‘Tell me about your interests and hobbies?’
3: I will draw the session to a close and give the young people an opportunity to ask questions.	‘It has been really lovely to meet you today, thank you for coming to this session. I have planned with X to meet you again next week for the interview if you are still happy to take part. Do you have any questions ahead of that meeting?’

2nd Session: Interview Schedule

<u>Structure</u>	<u>Questions and Prompts</u>
1: I will have a short amount of problem free informal chat and then reread the consent form and participant information to the young people. I will remind them of their right to withdraw at any point and check that they are happy to continue.	'Hi, thank you for meeting me again today. How has your week been? I will just begin by rereading the consent form and remind you of the participant information sheet. If you decide at any point that you don't want to take part in the interview or that you don't want to answer a question that is fine please let me know and we will stop'.
2: I will explain what the young people need to do to create their timelines.	<p>'Hopefully you have a piece of paper and some pens in front of you. To begin this interview I would like you draw a timeline on the paper mapping out your experiences in school. You can begin the timeline wherever you want and include any events that feel important to you. These can include events that happened in school or outside of school. I will give you as long as you need to do this, please can you let me know when you have finished'.</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <p>How old were you when you started school?</p> <p>Tell me a bit about your experiences in primary school?'</p> <p>How did you find the move from primary school to secondary school?</p>
3: I will allow time for the young people to finish their timelines and then ask them to explain what they have drawn. I will ask questions in response to what they have drawn on their timelines.	<p>Prompts:</p> <p>'Can you tell me a little bit more about that?'</p> <p>'How did you feel when that happened?'</p> <p>'Who was there when that happened?'</p>
4: If the young person does not talk about their experiences of having SEMH needs or when they first realised they had SEMH needs I will ask further questions.	<p>'When did you first realise that you had SEMH needs?'</p> <p>'How did you feel at that time?'</p>

	<p>'Has your understanding changed since that time?'</p> <p>'Was there anything that helped you during that time?'</p> <p>'Did you face any barriers?'</p>
5: I will then explore the young peoples understanding and experiences of having SEMH difficulties in combination with receiving free school meals.	<p>'Do you think you have different needs from other young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties?'</p> <p>'What advice would you give to a young person who also had SEMH difficulties and received free school meals?'</p> <p>'Do you need different support from other young people with SEMH needs because you also receive FSMs?'</p>
6: The interview will end by asking the young people about their hopes for the future?	<p>'What are your hopes for the future?'</p> <p>'What would you like to do when you grow up?'</p> <p>'What will help you achieve your goals?'</p>
7: I will end the interview and provide a short debrief for the young people.	<p>'Thank you for your time today taking part in this interview. I has been really interesting hearing your experiences. How has it felt for you reflecting on you school experiences?'</p> <p>'Just to remind you, you can pull out from the research at any time. If you tell X she will be able to inform me and I will remove all your interview data from the research project'.</p> <p>'X will pass you a sheet with different services you can contact. If this interview has brought up any emotions for you that you want to discuss please use any of these free services or talk to someone in school'.</p>

Appendix K: Support Services Handout for Young People

Support Services

After this interview if you would like to talk to someone these are some useful websites to look at that might help you:



Kooth offers free online mental health and emotional wellbeing support to young people. This includes a chat service with a qualified member of staff and online tips and resources.

<https://www.kooth.com/>



Young minds is a charity that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people. The website offers resources, help and advice for young people who need support.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>



Young Somerset is a local charity that offers support to young people on a range of different topics including mental health, social isolation and deprivation. The website includes resources and an opportunity for young people to self refer for therapeutic support (currently being run online).

<https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk/>



Off The Record is a social movement that offers support to young people age 11-25 years old who live in the Bristol area. They typically run group sessions and a drop in hub where young people can talk to a trained professional. This service may be disrupted due to coronavirus but resources continue to be available on the OTR website.

https://www.otrbristol.org.uk/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIot7NwaaI6QIVt4BQBh0jLwzKEAAYASAAEgK53fD_BwE

Appendix L: An Extract From a Coded Interview Transcript

The image shows a screenshot of a text editor interface. The main window displays an interview transcript with several lines of text. The text is color-coded with background highlights in shades of pink, green, and blue. To the right of the text, there is a sidebar containing a list of codes. Each code entry consists of a red circular icon with the letters 'DG' inside, followed by the name 'Dulcie Gray' and a three-dot menu icon. Below the name is a text label representing the code, and at the bottom of each entry is a text input field containing the placeholder text '@mention or reply'. The codes listed in the sidebar are: 'Positive experiences in primary years', 'Moved house and school', 'Relaxed attitudes', 'Positive experience in primary years', 'Relaxed approaches in school', and 'Active school life'. The text editor's status bar at the bottom shows 'English (U.S.)', 'Text Predictions: On', and a zoom level of '100%'.

I: And have you got any other positive experiences in your primary school years?

L: In Year 2 I came back England. That's it, yeah.

I: Yeah, that's an amazing experience. And is there anything that you wish had been different at primary school?

L: We've never come back to England.

I: What was it about New Zealand that you like so much?

L: It's just so pretty and then they also chilled like just everything. Yeah it was just everything really.

I: Was the school different?

L: Yeah really different.

I: Can you describe what was it like?

L: There wasn't a uniform. We'd learn stuff like swimming, running, cycling. There was a lot of like activity days. The food was really nice at school. Yeah, it was very sporty there which I quite liked.

I: Yeah and I guess you feel your English primary school wasn't quite like that?

L: Yeah it wasn't so active, yeah.

I: How did you find your moves from primary school to secondary school?

L: It was alright. It was a big change but it was OK.

I: And then did you... have you put any key events in your secondary years?

L: Oh yeah, in Year 7 I got kicked out of St Andrews.

I: And is that when you moved to the PRU?

L: No I went in Year... I took three months off school after I've been kicked out and then I joined Wellington School and then I was kicked out of there in Year 8 well. And then I joined the PRU.

I: Ok, can you explain little bit about what was difficult in secondary school?

Positive experiences in primary years

@mention or reply

DG Dulcie Gray ...

Moved house and school

@mention or reply

DG Dulcie Gray ...

Relaxed attitudes

@mention or reply

DG Dulcie Gray ...

Positive experience in primary years

@mention or reply

DG Dulcie Gray ...

Relaxed approaches in school

@mention or reply

DG Dulcie Gray ...

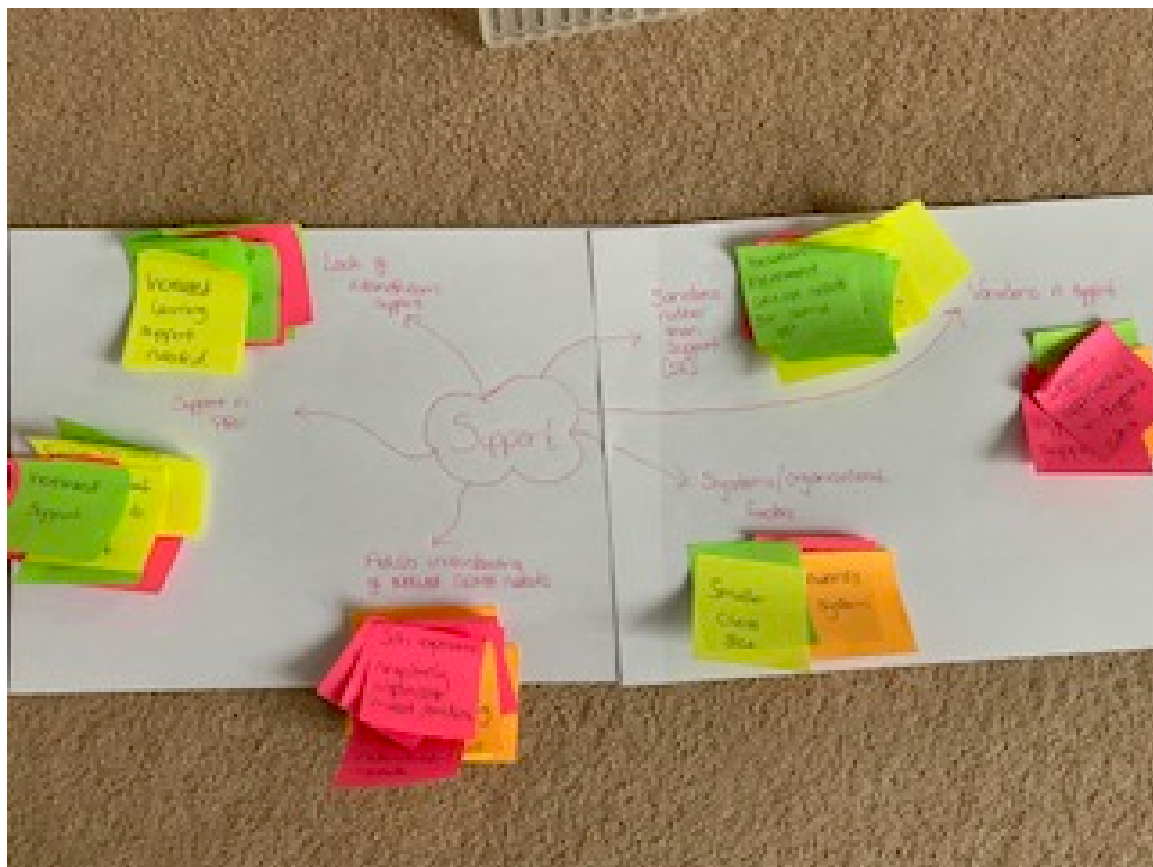
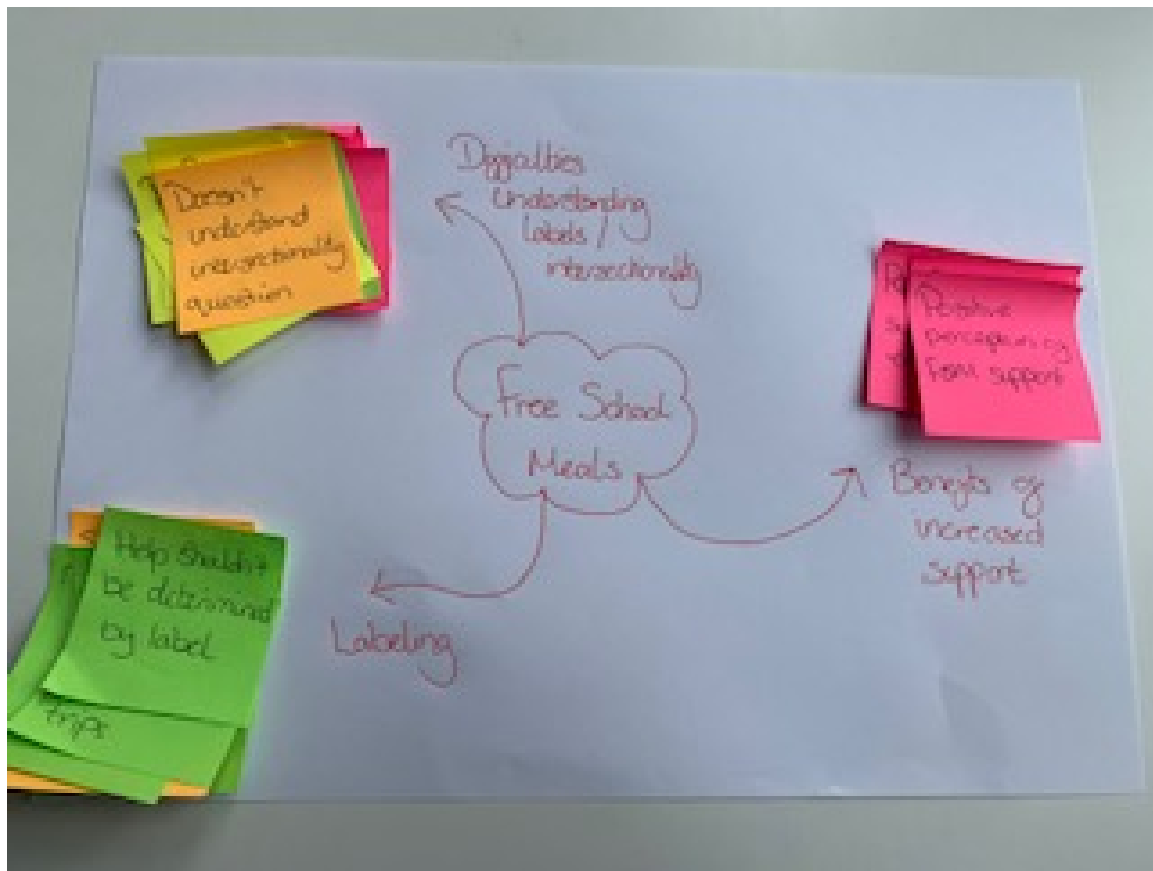
Active school life

@mention or reply

English (U.S.) Text Predictions: On 100% Gi

Appendix M: Thematic Analysis Mind Maps





Appendix N: Thematic Analysis Codes Organised into Super and Subordinate Themes

Positive school experiences	
Primary school	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive perception of primary school • Mixed experiences in primary school • Positive primary experience • Positive primary experience • Positive experiences in primary school • Example of positive primary experiences • Positive primary experience • Positive example of primary school • Positive experiences in primary years • Positive experiences in primary years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive experiences linked to food and drink • Pride following school experience • Practical learning experiences • Being active • Creative experience • Active school life • School trips • School trips • Positive experience in secondary school

Transitions		
Moving house	Permanent exclusions	Primary to secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different approaches in schools • Contrasting approaches in schools • Moved house and schools • Moved house • Difficult to move schools • Mid year transition • Making new friends makes transitions difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions are anxiety provoking • Anxious about school move • Permanent exclusion and school move • Negative perception of PRU • Changed perception of PRU • Positive transition to PRU • Move to PRU • Permanent exclusion • Exclusion from mainstream • Multiple school moves • Permanent exclusion • Permanent exclusion • Unable to remember 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging transition to secondary school • Settling into secondary school • Difficulties began in Year 7. • Transition to secondary • Behavioural difference between primary and secondary • Behavioural difference between primary and secondary • Transition to secondary • Big change at transition points

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reason of exclusion • Varied support depending on school • Permanent exclusion • Permanent exclusion • Treated different to others • Feeling unwanted • Permanent exclusion 	
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Affective factors		
Attitudes about school	Self-image	High aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmotivated by school work • Not completing work in lockdown • Indifference towards school • Negative perception of school • Individual mindset impacts education goals • Asking for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in how she views herself • Viewed herself as a naughty child • Individual development since moving schools • Changed perception on how to manage difficult emotions • Linked changed to own behaviour • Change in perceptions around school • Attempting to change • Participating in more school work • Changed behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High aspirations • Motivated to have enough money to fulfil aspirations • Future aspirations • Qualifications around area of interest • Goals for the future • High aspirations

Support		
Practical adult support	Sanctions rather than support	Provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased learning support needed • Academic support • Increased support around areas of interest • No changes to current support • Increased support is positive • Feeling more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation increased SEMH needs for YP • Isolation increased SEMH needs for YP • Negative experiences of internal exclusion • Negative experiences of internal exclusion • Isolation may be a deterrent for some YP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for increased education about staying safe in the community • Lack of education about life skills • Being allowed space • Rewards system • Having a responsibility • Being allowed space

<p>supported by school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult support • Adult support helped change perceptions • Receiving the right support • Adult support should be available in all schools • Lack of support • Adult support if needed • Extra help would benefit YP • Adult support • Increased support • Changing practice to make it helpful for YP • Limited adult support • Limited adult support • Limited adult support • Limited adult support • Importance of increased support • Adult support changed behaviours • The wrong adult support has a negative impact • Adult support increased problems • Teachers did not adapt practices to meet needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to do • Boredom • Negative experiences of internal exclusion • Internal exclusion sig memory from mainstream • Nothing to do • Internal exclusion • Perception that punishments were always the response for SEMH needs • Perception of always being in trouble • Removal of free time • Removal of free time • Punished rather than supported • Punished rather than supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small class • Small class • Adult to child ratio
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Transitions		
Moving house	Permanent exclusions	Primary to secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different approaches in schools • Contrasting approaches in schools • Moved house and schools • Moved house • Difficult to move schools • Mid year transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions are anxiety provoking • Anxious about school move • Permanent exclusion and school move • Negative perception of PRU • Changed perception of PRU • Positive transition to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging transition to secondary school • Settling into secondary school • Difficulties began in Year 7. • Transition to secondary • Behavioural difference between

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new friends makes transitions difficult 	<p>PRU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to PRU • Permanent exclusion • Exclusion from mainstream • Multiple school moves • Permanent exclusion • Permanent exclusion • Unable to remember reason of exclusion • Varied support depending on school • Permanent exclusion • Permanent exclusion • Treated different to others • Feeling unwanted • Permanent exclusion 	<p>primary and secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural difference between primary and secondary • Transition to secondary • Big change at transition points
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Relationships	
Adult relationships	Peer relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships with all staff • Poor relationships with school staff • Quality of relationships impact what is shared • Relationships important • Importance of adults understanding individual experiences • Feeling not liked by teacher • Teachers response attributed to difficulties • Changes in key adults • Behavioural response influenced by relationships • Poor relationships with staff • Adult support and relationships • Understanding of needs • Adults understanding individual needs • Not being listened to • Not being listened to • Treated differently from others • Adults understanding of individual needs • Positive relationships with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging peer interactions • Felt use to being alone • Felt along in primary school • Didn't spend much time with friends • Didn't speak to people in primary school • More friends in first school • Negative influence of peer group • Avoid influence of peer group • Negative influence of peers • Peer relationships impact transitions • Lack of peer relationships make transitions challenging • Changes in peer relationships • No sense of belonging • Feeling alone • School experience impacted friendships • Sense of belonging • Negative influence of peers • Importance of peer relationships • Peer relationships important in transitions

Intersectionality

- Positive perception of free school meal support
- Extra support for FSM pupils
- Receiving support entitled to
- Unsure what support is available
- Difficult to explain the impact of FSM
- Understanding needs but not being able to step away when overwhelmed
- Labelled as naughty
- Help shouldn't be determined by a label
- FSM label
- FSM label unimportant
- FSM doesn't change support needed
- Labelled behaviour as bad
- SEMH needs fluctuated
- Difficulties maintaining behaviour changes
- Examples of behaviour
- Doesn't understand intersectionality question
- Support the same for all SEMH pupils
- FSM – desire to be the same as others
- Independence managing needs is important
- Independence managing SEMH needs
- Impact of SEMH needs
- SEMH needs impacted reactions to situations
- Explanation of behaviour
- Interpreting FSM to mean lunches
- Desire to change lunches
- Doesn't understand labels
- Explanation for challenging behaviour
- SEMH needs connected to feelings about school
- Negative emotions around behavioural incident
- Example of SEMH needs

NB: The colour code used within these tables represents the different participants.