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The Link Between Mental Health, Social And Emotional Vulnerability And Life Chances: School Based Early Identification Of Socially And Emotionally Vulnerable Adolescents In A Deprived Urban Community

being a Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor Of Philosophy in the University of Hull

by

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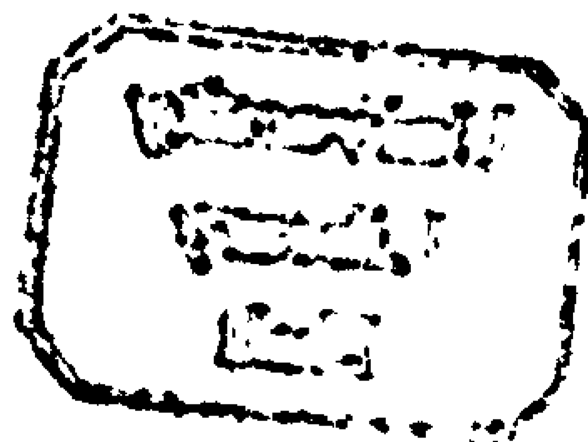

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

BESD Under the 2001 Code of Practice the EBD category was altered to cover **B**ehavioural, **E**motional, or **S**ocial **D**ifficulties.

CoP (Code of Practice) Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. This is the document that all LEAs, schools and Governors work to. It is an advisory rather than a statutory document published by the Department for Education and Skills. The 1994 Code of Practice was revised in November 2001 and is based on the statutory framework of the 1993 Education Act, Part IV of the 1996 Education Act and the SEN and Disability Act 2001.

DES Department of Education and Science.

DfE Department for Education.

DfEE Department for Education and Employment.

DfES Department for Education and Skills.

The above four entries are all names used at different times by the government department that runs education in the United Kingdom. At the time of completing this research the department was known as the DfES but all four designations are used at times within this work depending on the context.

EBD Emotional or Behavioural Difficulties, see BESD.

EPS Educational Psychology Service.

EWO Education Welfare Officer.

EWS Education Welfare Service.

Excellence in Cities DfES initiative, launched in March 1999, aimed at raising pupils' aspirations and achievements and at tackling disaffection, social exclusion, truancy and indiscipline.

GCSEs General Certificate of Secondary Education, public examinations taken in Year 11.

GLD General Learning Difficulties, usually a cognitive ability of or below 70, the British Psychological Society's categories 'limited' and 'severely limited'.

IEP Individual Educational Plan. Under the Code of Practice pupils on the SEN register have an IEP that outlines perceived needs, specifies targets and links these with strategies and resources to meet those targets.

INSET In Service Training. The programme of continuing professional development organised by schools for their staff.

KS Key Stage. The compulsory educational years in the United Kingdom are divided into 4 Key Stages. Key Stages 3 and 4 cover the secondary education of a child.

LEA Local Education Authority.

LoC Locus of Control. This is the degree to which an individual believes that they can exert meaningful control over their own lives (internal LoC) as opposed to being in the hands of external forces such as circumstances or fate (external LoC).

LSA Learning Support Assistant. These are unqualified assistants who work either in classrooms or, under the supervision of a qualified teacher, withdraw students for work in small groups or individually.

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education.

PH Physically Handicapped.

PRU Pupil Referral Unit. A LEA provision for pupils who are educated outside mainstream provision because of their behavioural difficulties. In the LEA of this study two permanent exclusions and a serious criminal offence are usually the criteria for a PRU placement rather than seeking an alternative mainstream establishment for the pupil.

PSE (PHSE) Personal And Social Education (Personal, Health And Social Education). This subject goes under several different names in different schools but essentially covers a range of personal, social, pastoral, current affairs, citizenship and general knowledge issues.

SATs Standard Assessment Tests. National tests set externally that are taken by all pupils in State education at set times unless they are disapplied. The results are reported to the DfES.

School Action Part of the graduated approach to supporting SEN under the CoP. School Action applies 'when staff identify that a pupil has SEN – Subject teachers, in consultation with the SENCo, devise interventions additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer' (CoP Toolkit, Section 1, p9. DfES, 2001).

School Action Plus This is put into place when 'additional or different strategies to those at *School Action* are' required to support a child's SEN. The 'advice or support of eternal specialists' is sought. (CoP Toolkit, Section 1, p9. DfES, 2001).

SEN Special Educational Needs. These are needs deemed to require support other than that which would normally be available to support the full range of educational needs within the classroom.

SENCo Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. A member of school staff in charge of special educational need provision within the school, usually a member of the Senior Management Team.

SEN Register The register the school is obliged to keep under the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The criteria for entry onto this register changed during the writing of this work with the introduction of a revised Code of Practice in November 2001. In broad terms pupils who have needs which require more than classroom based recognition are listed on this register.

SM/SMT Senior Management Team. The team of senior teachers who are responsible for much of the running of the school. The SMT usually includes the Head teacher, and Deputy Heads, Heads of Upper and Lower School, Heads of Year, Pastoral Heads, SENCo and some subject co-ordinators.

SpLD Specific Learning Difficulties. This can refer to any aspect of a pupil's functioning that is seen as discrepant with their general ability. In reality it is identified by comparing their basic reading ability (decoding rather than comprehension) with their cognitive ability. The usual criterion is a discrepancy below the 1st percentile between cognitive ability and literacy attainments.

Statement of Special Educational Need Under the Code of Practice (see above) when it is judged that a school can not meet the special educational needs of one of its pupils from its resources alone a statutory assessment will be conducted. This assessment involves the collation of advice from a range of professionals. The outcome of such an assessment might be that the LEA writes a Statement of Special Educational Need in which recommendations are set out and often a commitment to additional funding is made. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need have these Statements reviewed annually. Many LEAs are reviewing this arrangement, with a view towards uncoupling the link between finance and Statements and so there is not uniformity of practice around the country.

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this work are to:

- Explore the concept of adolescent vulnerability;
- Establish easily administered, reliable means of early identification of the most vulnerable; and
- Suggest some school level interventions.

This research focuses on adolescents in a socially deprived area. The thesis contains two parts:

Part 1 explores the theoretical contexts, examining the social, educational and moral climate, and concludes that potential vulnerability is not being identified early enough in young people's lives for effective interventions to be implemented. The phenomenon and experience of adolescence is explored from a variety of perspectives, and various definitions of adolescence examined. The broad range of experience representing both typical and atypical adolescence is considered.

A range of socio-economic factors and psychometric measures are reviewed for potential use as early indicators of vulnerability. The four screening measures chosen from the range reviewed are social deprivation, self-esteem, locus of control (LoC) and coping strategies. Social deprivation indicators establish background levels of life chances and prospects. Self-esteem is used to identify the most vulnerable; locus of control adds

information about the nature of their vulnerability, and coping strategies informs potential practical interventions.

Part 2 focuses on practical research. The prospects of the subject population are explored using a range of indicators, including the social and educational alienation and dysfunction of its young adolescents. Six hypotheses are defined and the selected psychometric tools piloted and administered on all of Year 7 of the subject school. Pupils are identified as either vulnerable or not identifiably vulnerable. Case studies using semi-structured interviews are conducted, adding a qualitative, experiential dimension to the statistical, psychometric findings.

Based on this research conclusions are drawn which have academic application and directly inform practical interventions which, if implemented in early adolescence, would potentially alleviate the identified vulnerability.

PART 1: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1 : THE RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH

1.1 The Parameters Of This Thesis

It is the intention of this thesis to answer certain academic research questions relating to the incidence and nature of adolescent dysfunction, and to offer suggestions to professionals in a position to identify and intervene with young people and their mental health.

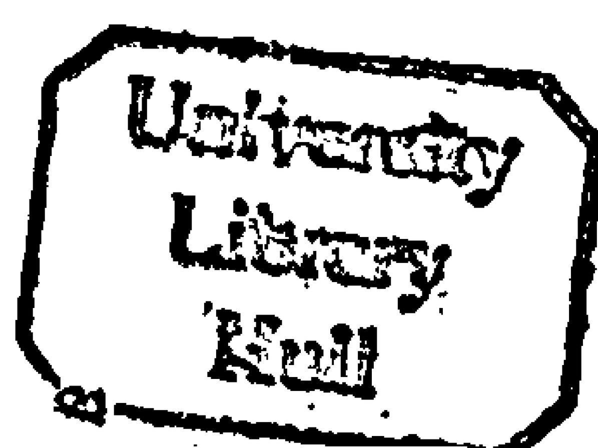
The predominant questions of this study are concerned with issues surrounding the identification of, and intervention in, factors relating to adolescent mental health which impact upon later life chances. These factors will form a part of the definition of vulnerability detailed in Chapter 5.1.

It is recognised that there are much wider issues involved in mental health in general, particularly when viewed from a medical perspective, but these are not the subject of this work. The very serious and important areas of diagnosable psychiatric problems such as psychosis, neurosis and schizophrenia are deliberately excluded from this work in all but a cursory manner. This work comes from the perspective of educational psychology. It is concerned with aspects of a young person's life that impact upon their educational uptake and outcome which can be measured in an educational setting and where interventions can be put in place through the educational support system.

1.2 The Stage At Which EBD Is Formally Recognised

Under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) which was in force through most of this research, students at risk from mental health difficulties which would impact upon their educational uptake and outcome would have been supported through the category of need labelled Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). Under this system students were placed along a five staged system ranging from Stage 1 for students who required classroom based recognition and support through to Stage 5 where the responsibility for the student's support was shared between the school and the Local Education Authority. Under the revised Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) this category was subsequently renamed Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The five stages were replaced with the express intention of de-emphasising the hierarchical and sequential nature of the different types of support.

Traditionally one of the largest and most costly categories of special educational need recognised by Local Education Authorities when allocating resources has been EBD. Despite this the researcher's professional experience has been that the earlier stages of recognition, school SEN Registers are overwhelmingly made up of pupils identified as having learning difficulties of one sort or another (GLD or SpLD) rather than of pupils with EBD. Even when schools seek the advice of Educational Psychologists on pupils' social or behavioural development the targets on these pupils' IEPs frequently relate solely to literacy and numeracy with no strategies in place or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targets to aim for relating to the social and behavioural issues that have prompted the referral.

Behavioural issues consume a lot of teacher time and are a constant topic of conversation among teachers. By and large that is the level concern stays at; talking about it, reacting to individual incidents of indiscipline as they occur and containing what is seen as an interruption to the smooth running of the school. Identifying underlying difficulties within the pupil and supporting them in a therapeutic manner is much rarer. It is the researcher's professional opinion that several factors are at work here:

- There is a sort of fatalism on the part of teachers who assume that chronic low level behaviour problems are an inevitable part of school life.

- It is possible that teaching staff do not directly link behavioural problems with educational achievement and that is what they feel is their prime concern. Other issues are secondary and only command concern when the degree to which they are recognised as impacting on educational attainments reaches a certain level.

- Social and behavioural issues are seen as more 'woolly' than literacy and numeracy issues. Identifying a child's difficulties with handwriting, setting targets and strategies to meet those targets is often much easier and clearer than applying the same analytical and logical scrutiny to a child's social dysfunctions.

- Professional pride makes some teachers reluctant to admit that they find coping with the behaviour of some pupils difficult.

- Parental pressure to have their children put on the SEN Register for EBD is not as great as it is for learning difficulties. Most schools have a steady stream of parents queuing up to express their view that their child 'has dyslexia', for example, and to make the leap from that to a belief that they should be on the SEN Register. Usually communication between school and parents on EBD matters is the other way round and parents frequently see it as their role to reduce the school's recognition of the child's EBD.

It is argued that these factors account for the low numbers of pupils appearing on the EBD register at early stages of concern such as School Action and School Action Plus. There is often little formal recognition of their difficulties as a special educational need until things reach the stage where school based support is considered insufficient to meet these needs. This is not to say that the pupil's behaviour has not attracted attention. It is likely that there has been a great deal of recognition through the disciplinary and punishment system, but this is a reactive and punitive system that responds to specific incidents. It is not a supportive system that identifies needs within the child and their operation within the school system and offers supportive interventions.

Frequently the first notification the LEA has that a particular child has EBD is when they are being asked to provide relatively more costly strategies such as one-to-one behavioural support, find another school for the child, fund a PRU placement, arrange interim tuition or even investigate residential provision (SEN Section, Doncaster LEA, 2004, unpublished data.). As is the policy with all LEA support for SEN additional funding, frequently through a Statement of Special Educational Needs, it should only come in to play when all avenues of help within the school have been exhausted. The nature of EBD is such that by the time these later stages are reached emotional positions have often been taken. Pupils refuse to go to school, other parents are complaining, teachers are threatening to involve Unions and so on and so insisting on a period of school based intervention is not practical. LEAs are forced to consider the more expensive provisions.

1.3 The Emotional Versus The Behavioural Aspects Of EBD

There exists a well established understanding among Educational Psychologists and other educational professionals that in practice the vast majority of pupils identified by their schools as possibly coming into the EBD category are those who exhibit challenging and disruptive behaviour as part of their emotional needs. Pupils whose emotional needs lead to more internalised distress and withdrawal tend, this thesis asserts, to be overlooked by their schools and so not referred to the EPS for assessment. This discrepancy can be accounted for by reference to a number of factors; ease of identification, perceived impact on the smooth running of the school, the believed ability to effect a change and the political climate.

Externalised and disruptive behaviours which have an immediate impact on the smooth running of a school are quickly recognised and acted on while what might be severe and debilitating internalised mental health issues are harder to recognise and possibly easier to ignore. The child who flings a chair through a window or tells a teacher to 'fuck off' is much more quickly noticed than is the child who cries alone in the toilets each day and contemplates self-harm in their bedroom at night.

Further, more subtle indicators of potential emotional difficulties such as dysfunctional styles of inter-personal relationship and friendship patterns (Chapter 4.2) are seldom viewed as significant enough to warrant adult attention or intervention.

1.4 The Purpose Of Schooling

State education (the Local Education Authority, school establishments and the various support agencies) all work under extremely tight financial restrictions. The DfES, and the Local Council through which it works, keeps up a constant flow of initiatives with names like 'Accountability', 'Raising Standards' and 'Best Value' which are designed to keep costs down and raise academic achievement as measured by examination results. These two indices of success (financial cost and examination results) are quantifiable and can be measured in the short–term. The message from them is clear; the prime aim of the school is to teach and to raise academic standards. Emotional and behavioural needs of children only become a pertinent issue when they impact upon this prime aim.

At a deeper level, concern could be raised over the accepted definition of 'academic standards'. To a large extent, by the time the consideration of what constitutes 'academic standards' reaches the classroom the debate about the purpose of education is almost over. In 1815 the historian, economist and philosopher (and father of John Stuart Mill) James Mill wrote a treatise on the purpose of education and the best path to follow to achieve that purpose. He was responding to what he believed to be the short-sighted policy of viewing education as a practical training ground for future workers. Mill opined that "the end of education is to render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness, first to himself and next to other beings....Education, in the sense in which it is usually taken, and in which it shall here be used,

denotes the means which may be employed to render the mind, as far as possible, an operative cause for happiness......Happiness is too precious an effect, to let any cause of it, however small, run to waste and be lost. The means of human happiness are not so numerous that any of them can be spared. Not to turn everything to account is here, if anywhere, bad economy, in the most emphatical sense of the phrase." James Mill (1815) On Education, p1.

Even the most cursory examination of the curricula in use over the years since then, from the Board Of Education prescriptions of 1904 and 1935 through to the present National Curriculum (1990), reveals the inextricable conflation of the terms 'education' and 'preparation for work'.

It is the contention of this work that such pressures further skew the perception of front line workers in education. They are working in a climate where longer-term qualitative outcomes are given second place to these more immediate pressures. In the words of the then DES the job of schools is 'to improve standards in schools, using the available resources to yield the best possible return.' (Better Schools, p90, DES 1985).

1.5 A Caution To Educationalists

The values that inform the practical research offered in this thesis, and which reflect the findings of the preceding literature review, argue that such an approach is short sighted, and that even on financial and majority self-interest grounds it is not in society's interest to ignore the unhappy child. The long-term impact on society of unalleviated mental health problems in young people is explored in some detail in Chapter 2.3.2.

In addition to society's self-interest there is the moral question of whether the Education Authority has a responsibility towards the unhappy child. As discussed in Chapter 2.3.2 of this thesis many of the growing number of young suicides and para-suicides are in young people who had not been identified as having obvious emotional health needs before their suicide attempt. This is not to say that they had not been living lives of quiet despair. Educational professionals must ask themselves whether or not they owe a duty of care to these children in their distress.

Even on more immediate and pragmatic grounds it is possible that the quietly unhappy child is damaging their own education as much as the disruptive child is. Emotional problems such as those linked to low self-esteem play their part in absenteeism, underachievement, and general lifestyle choices. Both Local Education Authorities and Social Services are well aware of a worryingly large number of 14 year olds who, by one means or another, have effectively finished their school education. This can be through strings of

repeated temporary or permanent exclusion, spells of voluntary non-attendance, highly mobile domiciliary arrangements, lengthy periods of incapacity through drug use or a variety of other means.

1.6 Interventions

It is the contention of this work that children who are potentially vulnerable to disaffection, alienation and social dysfunction ***can*** be identified at an early stage and that ameliorative work ***is*** worth putting in place.

Chapter 5 of this work looks at a range of possible ways in which this potential vulnerability could be identified to allow for targeted interventions. The practicalities of each one are considered. One of the key factors in the choice of indices is the degree to which the identified area of vulnerability lends itself to useful ameliorative work for the subjects.

Language development was a very strong contender for a research variable as there is strong evidence for the efficacy of intervention programmes through childhood (Royal College of Speech And Language Therapists, 2003). Such research does suggest that the earlier interventions are in place the more successful they are likely to be. This need for early intervention is reflected in the lists of educational resource publishers such as Lucky Duck, McGraw-Hill and Nfer Nelson, whose titles are predominantly aimed at National Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2.

Friendship skills are another area of child development which has a strong history of successful school level support although research such as that of Erwin (1993) suggests that, once established, difficulties with social relationships can be both pervasive into many areas of an individual's life and

resistant to ameliorative action. Once again much of the published support material is aimed at Key Stages 1 and 2 although good programmes do exist for older students such as that by Street (2004).

One of the indices of potential emotional and social vulnerability used in this work is self-esteem. Whilst some previous research has established the relatively stable nature of self-esteem over many years in a child's life (Damon, 1983) and a strong relationship between levels of self-esteem and familial conditions (Coopersmith, 1967), other researchers (Alsaker and Olweus, 1992) point to self-esteem as being particularly unstable in the years of early adolescence (see Chapter 5.4.4). This would suggest that effective, school-based interventions aimed at raising the self-esteem of pupils might be particularly appropriate at this time.

Such interventions might include efforts to refine the criteria a young person is using to assess him or her self against. Similarly, both locus of control and coping strategies can be taught and pupils can significantly improve their quality of life if they are taught to reflect on their approach to it and to extend the range of coping strategies at their disposal to include more functional ones.

1.7 Corroborative Longitudinal Versus Familial Studies

The most reliable way of assessing whether pupils identified as vulnerable on the chosen indices really are at risk of developing into dysfunctional adults would be through a longitudinal study. A potentially 'Vulnerable Group' would be identified, matched with a control group and then no interventions offered. The sample would then be re-assessed in 10, 15 or 20 years time to ascertain whether or not pupils showing vulnerability in early adolescence, evidenced by scores on the relevant selected indices, really did fare worse in later life than their peers without these features. A further group could be offered various interventions to assess their efficacy. Whilst a study of this sort might produce useful data there would be serious ethical as well as practical implications and little chance for intervention with the most vulnerable subjects.

The pragmatic approach adopted in this research is to explore the likely future social vulnerability of young people through the lives of their families. No directional or causal link is being proposed although it is possible that the psychological or social circumstances that have influenced the direction of the other family members' lives are present in the lives of the subjects.

CHAPTER 2 : ADOLESCENCE

2.1 Defining Adolescence

Adolescence can be defined according to a range of different models depending upon the perspective of the person doing the defining and the purpose to which it is to be put.

2.1.1 A Linguistic Definition

The word adolescent derives from the Latin verb 'adolescere', meaning to grow to maturity. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary offers the rather vague view that adolescence is the period intervening between childhood and adulthood; a definition that can only have meaning if it is clear when childhood ends and when adulthood starts.

2.1.2 A Legal Definition

Looking to the legal services for a definition of adolescence is not very useful as the law in the United Kingdom does not appear to recognise adolescence as a distinct period at all but to offer one legal approach to children and another legal approach to adults. This model requires the law to define a precise and objective division between childhood and adulthood, which it does, but the definition varies according to the area of the law under

consideration. The need for an objective cut-off point between childhood and adulthood leads to an extremely fragmented approach with several absurdities and anomalies.

The age at which children are considered to have matured sufficiently to take responsibility for their criminal actions is 10 years old, to drink alcohol in a public house is 18 years old, to receive independent social security support is 16 years old if estranged from parents, otherwise it is 18 years old, to consent to engage in sexual intercourse is 16 years old and to die for their country in armed combat is 17 years old (although the United Nations would consider these to be child soldiers and so illegal until their 18th birthdays). Numerous other cut-off points exist under the law making the legal division between childhood and adulthood variously between 10 and 21 years old with little recognition of adolescence as a process that happens over time and that varies from individual to individual. Such anomalies give a most confusing picture.

2.1.3 A Medical Definition

From the perspective of medicine the most accurate and sensitive description would be to include the period in a person's life that starts with the onset of physical puberty and ends when the person reaches full physical maturity. Unlike the legal definition this is a person-centred definition and would differ from person to person in terms of their chronological age. Interestingly many

of the most obvious factors in this period of physical maturation would involve the sex determinants of the individual, the child becoming more clearly a man or a woman. Individuals move from the relatively sexually homogeneous community of childhood to the increasingly sexually divergent society of adulthood. The effect of such a definition would be to have some people entering or exiting medically defined adolescence when on all other criteria they were still children such as girls who reach menarche at eight years old.

2.1.4 A Psychological Definition

A psychological definition of adolescence would involve some measure of emotional and social functioning mapped on to the physical maturation and the external circumstances of a young person. As with a medical definition this period would not cover a neat and discrete period of time, would vary greatly from person to person, and in some cases might well extend into areas that the law and social convention would clearly describe as adulthood. In addition to the acquisition of mature sexual characteristics a psychological definition would involve the acquisition of gender defining characteristics and identities.

2.1.5 An Educational Definition

The education system, like the legal system, is not geared up to a sensitive, person-centred approach to adolescence. Despite theoretical educationalists having discussed the relative merits of freeing the school system from the artificial cut-off points of chronological age in grouping children, the practicalities of the system make it very difficult for any child or school to operate outside the prescribed age-banding. The various dimensions that a school would have to measure and adjust for make any other system unworkable. For this reason, and in full acknowledgement of its limitations, Peterson (1988) defines 'adolescence' as the second decade of life, a catch-all definition which will inevitably include both those whom society would clearly describe as 'children' and those who would themselves reject the label 'adolescent' in favour of 'adult'.

2.1.6 The Definition Used In This Work

It is acknowledged that when studying a psychological phenomenon, such as the subjective experience and functioning of adolescents, a psychological definition of adolescence would be the most sensitive and appropriate to use. Unfortunately, for pragmatic reasons almost identical to those experienced in the educational system, the practical research that forms the body of this work will borrow from this educational model and define adolescence according to the subject's chronological age. In full recognition of the limitations of this

system, adolescence will be deemed to cover National Curriculum Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11; that is pupils aged 11 years 0 months 01 days to 16 years 0 months 0 days. Using this definition of adolescence, 'early adolescence' will be deemed to cover pupils in National Curriculum Years 7, 8 and 9, that is National Curriculum Key Stage 3.

2.2 Typical Adolescence

Whatever definition of adolescence is used the number of years the period covers is relatively brief in the expected life-span of an individual and is an unavoidable milestone on the road to adulthood. Despite its inevitability and relatively brief duration the period has attracted much public and private concern over many years and in nearly all societies. Evidence suggests, as discussed later in this chapter, that society is a long way from having learned over time and from experience how to view this period with equanimity and manage it without problems. In public policy, medicine, psychology, literature and many other disciplines the period referred to as adolescence has attracted a great deal of attention, much of it negative.

2.2.1 The Historical Recognition Of Typical Adolescence As Turbulent

That these years have held a peculiar significance in the consciousness of human beings over most of recorded time, a significance beyond that which their brief span would warrant, is beyond dispute. Whether this significance has been constant in form and intensity throughout all human time or across all human societies is less clear, indeed unlikely. Much socio-historical attention has been devoted to the idea of the 'creation' of childhood as a concept. The economic and social class implications of this creation have been explored at length by social commentators. Evidence of the worry, fear, despair or bewilderment that earlier societies have experienced in relation to even the typical behaviour of their young people can best be gathered through the art and literature of the times.

Chaucer's Franklin ascribed his son's disrespectful, frivolous and indiscreet behaviour to the turmoil that afflicted the minds of fourteenth century English youth (The Franklin's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, late 1300s). The feeling is fairly clear that Chaucer expected his middle-aged readers to recognise the phenomena and despair with the Franklin at the trials his son put him through. At the same time there is a suspicion that more relaxed readers might have sympathised with the son living under the burden of his rather humourless and authoritarian father's expectations. Perhaps escaping to Court and spending all of his allowance on fashionable clothes, drink and gambling was a natural reaction to the austerity and repression of his home life. Whichever

perspective we take twenty-first Century readers can clearly recognise the inter-generational tension being described.

Two hundred years later, at the end of the fifteen hundreds, William Shakespeare was making the same observations, children were more wayward and disturbed and less dutiful to authority than society would like. At times these years between childhood and adulthood were seen almost as a time of madness when the senses could not be trusted and self-destructive impulses could drag everyone in their wake. This can be seen in Hamlet, Othello, The Taming of The Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream and several other works (William Shakespeare, late 1500s).

2.2.2 Society's Current Recognition Of Turbulent Adolescence

Through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries a picture of the public perception of typical adolescence, as well as a more objective picture of actual adolescence, has become possible through a variety of much more scientifically objective sources than existed formerly. Sociology, psychology, medicine, politics and the law have all added to the picture of 'typical adolescence' that can be acquired through the less objective or formal, but still immensely illuminating and valuable, sources such as news media reports, books, films, plays, music and advertising. Thus an abundant combination of scientific, anecdotal and experiential account evidence can be used to support the view that the years of adolescence are, quite normally, years of peculiar turmoil. Sometime between childhood and adulthood, it seems to be agreed, many young people go through a period of great emotional turmoil and distress and this inner turmoil is often evident in behaviours that many adults see as aberrant, maladaptive or undesirable but which are, never-the-less, typical of this period.

Evidence of a popular attitude towards young people, and of the climate which young people will be aware exists in society, can be found in several news media outlets which appear to specialise in outrage at the young; blurring the boundaries between fact reporting, titillation and manipulation. Popular culture also frequently combines entertainment with education or warning about the potential for threat and turmoil that these years can represent.

2.2.2.1 Adolescence In Popular Culture

Any scientific and psychological examination of adolescence would do well to acknowledge that it is primarily an experiential event, shaped by and shaping the society it is a part of. The social climate in which it is experienced can be assessed through a systematic and considered appraisal of the first-hand popular culture and contemporary social phenomena that reflect and form the attitudes of the time.

Adolescence and the emotions, behaviours and traumas typically associated with it, have become a major genre of popular culture. Finding examples where the journey between quiescent childhood and responsible adulthood is strewn with obstacles is not hard. Frequently the explicit or implied message is that these traumas, or equivalents, are, in terms of frequency, something of the norm.

In his novel, A Clockwork Orange, Burgess (1962) gives a nightmare vision of youth culture in revolt. Whilst the elite 'respectable' society lives a semblance of a cultured and civilised life, gangs of youths, dispossessed by this society and so living outside it, maraud at large. The main character, Alex, is beyond any self-restraint or conventional moral code as he leads his comrades through an orgy of rape, robbery, torture and murder in order to gain a thrill in a society which can offer them no challenge or excitement on its own terms. The terror that these youths inspire in adult society, and the horror that Burgess engenders in the reader at the thought of this uncontrolled

testosterone is off-set against the disturbing interventions to instil conformity into the 15 year old Alex. Burgess' work was offered to the world as an object lesson in where the increasing alienation of youth might lead. He warns of the potential brutalisation of both youth and of the established structures of society 'necessary' to control them.

Boyle's film, Trainspotting (1996, based on Irvine Welsh's book of the same name) picks up Burgess' predictions of thirty years earlier. It portrays a bleak picture of modern males and the options available to them when born into a community that is already deprived, dysfunctional, depressing and alienated from the consumer rewards that are advertised and promoted all around. While Burgess offered a warning for the future, Boyle painted a picture of life as it really was for thousands of young people in the United Kingdom. Running through this work is the pathetic and almost doomed-to-be-futile determination of these young men to escape from their world of drugs and crime into the easy life they believe exists for others, but knowing no other way out than through drugs and crime. There are many similarities between the post-industrial Edinburgh society that Boyle depicts and numerous other communities around the country where ship building, steel working or mining have been dismantled in the face of economic imperatives, but with scant account for the human and social costs.

The community in which this current research is conducted has many similarities with Boyle's Edinburgh. Both are very male-dominated working class societies and in both cases there exists a very powerful and recent race

memory of the function of men in the community. Men worked hard and lived hard, earning their living, respect and identity through manual labour. This pattern was recent enough in the community's history still to form the model against which they measure themselves. They now find themselves paying the price of the prosperity they see others enjoying, and feel the pity and disgust they engender in those who are living the lives they aspire to and in order to preserve whose lifestyle their industry was closed down.

In addition to the numerous fictitious examples of the kind of experiences that are symptomatic of adolescent difficulties there is a growing body of autobiographical accounts of the traumas of adolescence. Elizabeth Wurtzel's candid and moving account of the emotional pain of being a child and young person coping with clinical depression in a country that tells you that all young people are having fun and going to be successful is an excellent example of this genre (Prozac Nation. Young And Depressed In America, 1995). Once again this book has many resonances with the current research as it outlines the total inadequacy and helplessness of family, friends, the professional services or medication to deal with a young person whose depressive and suicidal behaviour is so at odds with their picture of teenage years. Wurtzel describes the tendrils of dysfunction that lead from a medication-dependent adolescence into adulthood. Her work paints a bleak picture of the reality gap created in the minds of adolescents between an experience characterised by divorce, economic instability and AIDs on the one hand and the continual barrage of advertisements, celebrity obsession and media stories emphasising success and perfection on the other. One of the most poignant

aspects of Wurtzel's personal account is her ability to offer her work credibly as a collective 'cry for help' from a whole nation of adolescents, each imagining that they are alone in their distress.

Whether or not the above accounts of adolescence as portrayed in contemporary culture reflect reality they certainly reflect a frequently held view of the experience of adolescence for many people.

2.2.2.2 Contemporary Adolescence Revealed Through Research

Hastin-Bennett (1993) identifies the period of adolescence as frequently a time of potential difficulty. He asserts that the rapid physiological change at the time of adolescence may produce difficulties in psychological development leading to turbulent behaviour. It is further suggested that adolescence may produce particular difficulties for parents who may have to call on their reserves of tolerance and understanding.

If 'normal' development is defined as ***the most frequently occurring*** pattern of development, then there is a case for describing some degree of emotional insecurity and turmoil as a normal or typical part of adolescence. For psychologists there is certainly a case for asking what ***adaptive*** function such a tumultuous transition period might fill for the human condition. Several researchers have postulated a functional role for this period.

The anthropologist Margaret Mead (1961) acknowledged this turbulence of the adolescent years while recognising the near inevitability, the universality and the 'normalness' of this time. She likened the emotional and mental distress of these years to the misery of teething in a young baby in terms of its inevitability and naturalness. Nurmi, Poole and Kalakowski (1994) conceptualised adolescence as a transitional period of personality development which could incorporate a period of thinking about the future for the individual. They suggested that young people have a series of

developmental tasks to accomplish during this transition. These tasks include:

- achieving mature relationships with peers
- forming a sex-role identity
- achieving emotional independence from parents
- planning educational goals
- preparing for an economic career
- orientating for marriage and adult family life

The implication of Nurmi et al.'s work is that the turmoil that is frequently experienced is the natural consequence of struggling with such issues. To characterise it as a problem or to attempt to deny young people the chance to go through such a struggle is to do such young people a disservice.

Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) saw the adolescent period as essential for the development of self-reliance and emotional autonomy. Further possible positive functions which have been postulated for the emotional turbulence of adolescence include the re-negotiating of relationships with parents, a process which takes place alongside the development of cognitive and interpersonal competence (Blos, 1979), and a developing and evolving capacity for intimacy and relatedness (Lewis, 1993).

Conger and Peterson (1984) warn that a disproportionate amount of attention has been focussed on the emotional turmoil and other apparently dysfunctional aspects of adolescence. They recognise that many adolescents do experience occasional periods of uncertainty and self-doubt, of loneliness

and sadness, or of anxiety and concern for the future but they are also likely to experience joy, excitement, curiosity, a sense of adventure and a feeling of competence in mastering new challenges. Fontana (1991) provides an interactionist perspective on the relationship between adolescence and challenging behaviour in which he asserts that it is not physiological changes that create rebellious teenagers but society itself through its artificial methods of relating to young people. One form that Fontana suggests this takes in a complex industrial society is that we keep the young in a subservient role (that is financially dependent and still attending school) long after they have reached physical maturity. The 'problems' they then experience are the result of being forced into roles that evolution has not equipped them for.

From an evolutionary psychologist's perspective the turbulence of adolescence could be viewed as a kind of Darwinian filter. It could be argued that, until very recently, childhood was one of the devices through which evolution ensured that only the healthier (or more recently and more cynically, in terms of Marxist Darwinian theory, the wealthier) specimens made it through to reproductive maturity. By extension adolescence could be viewed as a period where individuals have the chance to prove their abilities to develop the mechanisms to deal with crises. Those who fail to adapt adequately to the exigencies of adolescence might experience difficulty in progressing to the next stage of finding a mate.

Whether or not it is believed that a causal relationship exists between adolescence and pathological functioning there is a general agreement that this period presents some peculiar adjustment problems and some serious challenges for both parents and society. The nature and the size of such difficulties are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.3. To this end it behoves those who are involved with the care, support and supervision of young people to consider scientifically and systematically some of the processes which are at work in shaping and reinforcing the developing adult and which, while doing so, can set up tensions with other demands on the individual: environmental, physiological, social, cultural or psychological.

2.3 Atypical Adolescence

2.3.1 Emotional And Mental Health Problems In Adolescents: The Degree To Which These Exist, Are Recognised And Are Addressed

Offer and Schonert-Reichl (1992) suggest that while roughly 80 per cent of adolescents manage the transition period between childhood and adulthood quite well over 20 per cent experience some level of emotional health difficulty in managing these years. The problem facing researchers and professionals involved with the support of young people is in identifying those individuals who are experiencing difficulty and in recognising the level and type of difficulty which warrants concern. This is a situation which is complicated by observations such as that of Hutter (1938) who states that adolescence is abnormal if everything passes normally. Similarly, Hyatt-Williams (1975) describes adolescence without normative crises as not being adolescence.

Some degree of emotional turmoil during the adolescent years is both inevitable and even considered by some as healthy. It is suggested that a certain level of internal conflict equips the young person to deal with later traumas. As with so many areas of mental, emotional or physical health the identification of a *problem* in a young person is dependent upon various hard-to-quantify measures. These include defining a commonly accepted cut off point on a continuum of distress or difficulty, the individual's strategies for either coping with or covering up the difficulty, and the resilience threshold of the individual involved. Such factors introduce a degree of uncertainty to the

issue, relying as they do on subjectivity and self-report, and it is likely that this difficulty with establishing scientific clarity leads to a reluctance on the part of professionals or caring adults to identify or diagnose. Common phrases such as, 'a lot of fuss about nothing', 'it's just adolescent moodiness', 'it's just a phase he'll grow out of ' or 'it's not as bad as it seems' might dismiss many young people's more serious, chronic or intractable distress.

That emotional and mental health problems amongst adolescents do exist, and that the problem is large and largely unmet, is the proposal of this thesis. As Martin Herbert says 'The number of children and adolescents requiring [psychological] help is extremely large; the number receiving psychological therapy is relatively small.' (Herbert, 1991, p 235).

The degree of consistency in diagnosis of adolescent mental health problems possible using the International Classification Of Diseases by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1992) and the Diagnostic And Statistical Manuals of the American Psychiatric Association (1994), has improved markedly due to two factors. The first is the development of reliable and valid instruments for the measurement of psychiatric symptoms, and the second is the refining of diagnostic categorisation (Cox, 1994). This must give grounds to hope that the situation will improve. However Dr Jeannette Phillips (in Kurtz et al., 1995) lamented the few established research facts that existed in the fields of epidemiology, natural history and the treatment of adolescent health problems. Such research as she saw it was still inadequate and incomplete. The area of greatest need for research is that of randomised, controlled trials

of the various treatments in use. Without some measure of their efficacy attempts to standardise or improve approaches to treatment are doomed to failure. If professionals recognise the inadequacy of resources for treatments for adolescent mental health problems there is likely to be a further reluctance to identify such problems. To label a young person as having a problem, especially a problem where self-perception and public stigma play their part, and then not be able to offer appropriate support is antithetical to the professionalism of many practitioners.

Despite the inadequacy of the existing data, the mismatch between need and provision is apparent. Gould's review of epidemiological studies in the UK and the USA estimated the prevalence of clinical dysfunction in children at 12%, with a range in the various studies stretching from as low as 6 % to as high as 37% (Gould et al., 1980). A major evaluation, conducted in the USA by the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) concluded that 5 to 15% (that is 3 to 10 million) of American children and adolescents were in need of some form of mental health service. What evidence there is suggests that only 20 to 33% of British and American young people with significant psychological problems receive the treatment they require (cf. Knitzer, 1982; Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970). Of equal concern is the finding by Sowder (1975) that scarce mental health resources are more likely to go to children with less severe disorders than to those children with the greatest need.

Although several of the above studies are now quite old more recent UK research suggests that their findings still hold true. In 1995 Kurtz et al. published the findings of a systematic review of the then published literature on the incidence and prevalence of mental health disorders in children and young people in the United Kingdom. Their concern was the effectiveness of treatment, and the demographic and socio-economic factors that might relate to need. This review also attempted to measure the extent and nature of unmet needs, children who do not reach the appropriate agency, or for whom provision is unsatisfactory or non-existent, or who drop out of treatment. The National Review Of Services For The Mental Health Of Children And Young People In England, 1993, cited by Kurtz et al., showed that fewer than 10% of NHS purchasing Authorities based their plans on any kind of assessment of the mental health needs of the population which they served (Kurtz et al., 1995)

Since that time, and largely in response to pressure that has grown from Kurtz' review, many Authorities have begun the task of assessing needs, but it is a complex and daunting task. Over the last five years the mental health charity, YoungMinds, has undertaken two national studies of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The first of these was called 'Whose Crisis?' (YoungMinds, 2000). It looked at the difficulties community based professionals faced in accessing in-patient services for young people with serious mental health problems and, in particular, highlighted an apparent mismatch between the services on offer and the needs often presented by young people. Such studies suggest that despite the increased focus now on

mental health services for young people the provision available is still woefully inadequate.

2.3.2 The Impact On Society Of Emotional And Mental Health Problems In Adolescents

Despite the difficulties of definition the mental health of children and young people in the United Kingdom has been under active review for most of the past decade. Mental Health was one of the Government's Five Key Areas For Improvement identified in their strategy: The Health Of The Nation (Dept. Of Health, 1992). At that time it was recognised that the mental health of today's children had important implications for the mental health of tomorrow's adults. The Labour Governments of 1997 and 2001 have continued this concern with their Health Action Zones project. The mental health of children and young people is a focus area in this project and both Health and Education Authorities receive additional funding to address it.

In 1990 The World Health Organisation published an analysis which clearly showed the increasing trend among young people in western countries to take their own lives. This analysis ranked suicide as among the top ten causes of death for all ages and in many western countries as the second most common cause of death, after road accidents, for 15 to 35 year olds. Offer and Schonert-Reichl (1992) reported that the suicide risk for adolescents in the United States had risen by 200 per cent in the previous decade. The Health Of The Nation acknowledged the relationship between an unmet need for mental health provision and a growing suicide rate amongst young people, an acknowledgement that has gained acceptance ever since. In 1998 in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland almost twice as many young men

aged 25 to 34 years died from suicide than in 1983. The number of suicides among women aged 25 to 34 years is now at its highest rate ever. Amongst young women aged 15 to 24 years suicides have increased by 15% since 1997. A substantial number of those who took their own lives were unknown to any professional agency and had not been identified by anyone, professional or family, as being at risk or in need of assistance. (Samaritans, 2000 and Office of National Statistics 1998).

Of late the significance of having unaddressed mental health problems in young people on the health of the whole of society has been an accepted concern, informing numerous governmental policies designed to address social exclusion and disaffection in young people.

This mismatch between need and provision for young people should lead to concern on a number of accounts:

- In the short-term there is the unalleviated distress of the young people involved.

- In addition to this there must be the possibility that many of these young people, suffering with either unidentified or unaddressed disorders, will go on to develop more intractable difficulties in later life, and to have a blight over their future adult lives, a blight which could have been avoided.

- There is a great deal of research highlighting the overlap between children and young people who commit crimes, are involved in drug abuse, experience homelessness and those with significant emotional and behavioural problems. This relationship places a heavy demand on financial resources and services from a variety of agencies. There are very real social and economic implications to this issue (Kurtz et al., 1995).

2.3.3 The Definition And Identification Of Emotional And Mental Health Problems In Adolescents

An all-encompassing and sufficient definition of child and adolescent mental health problems is not easy to produce. The concept of mental health is inextricable from the context in which it is being considered and the conceptual model in use.

2.3.3.1 Mental Health And Education

Education approaches childhood mental health from its own explanatory framework, and the best that can be achieved is a working definition, to be hedged around with provisos and used in full recognition of its inadequacies and limitations. Circular 9/94 (DfE) acknowledges the 'complexity of causation' of mental health problems, and offers a continuum 'between behaviour which challenges teachers but is within normal, albeit unacceptable, bounds and that which is indicative of serious mental illness' (p.7, paragraph 2). As with any continuum there is unlikely to be a clear and commonly agreed cut-off point. Wolfendale (1996) described child and adolescent mental health problems as those in which displays of emotions, behaviours or social relationships are sufficiently marked or prolonged to cause suffering or risk to development in the child, and/or distress or disturbance in the family, school or community.

2.3.3.2 Mental Health And The Health Service

Health, medical and psychiatric workers can call upon internationally recognised and respected classification systems such as The American Diagnostic And Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorders (DSM IV 1994) and the International Classification Of Diseases (ICD-10, WHO 1992). Reliance on these two authoritative sources for diagnosis of emotional and mental health problems is made much easier if, as with metric and imperial systems of measurement, the practitioner confines his or her use to either one or the other of them and avoids mixing them. Both systems appear to work well on their own but have such fundamental differences that moving between the two just creates confusions. In addition even these two illustrious tomes have only turned their serious attention to the mental health of young people in fairly recent years.

As a supplement to the accepted classification system and descriptors which are available to the medical profession there is the analysis of incidence and prevalence, which can be done through epidemiological survey data. This approach allows for a distinction to be made between problems and disorders; disorders being defined as problems which are severe or persistent (NHS HAS, 1995).

2.3.3.3 Mental Health And Multi-Agency Approaches

More recently a variety of Government sponsored projects and initiatives have sprung up. Several of these have been designed to cross the boundaries between Educational Services, Health Services and Social Services. These include The Urban Regeneration Project, New Deal for Communities and the central Government established Social Inclusion Unit set up in 1997. These initiatives have all focussed on the alarming increase in the incidence of various dysfunctional behaviours and experiences in young people and the impact of these upon the young people's lives and the cost to society as a whole. These behaviours and experiences include:

- Low school attendance and/or premature withdrawal from formal education;
- Low educational and employment related skills;
- Poor employment prospects;
- Criminal behaviour;
- Substance abuse/dependency;
- Teenage pregnancy;
- Prostitution and other sexual exploitation;
- Homelessness;
- Self-harm and suicide;
- Health problems associated with poverty, disadvantage and self-neglect.

Explanations for young people's vulnerability to the above factors have been ascribed to a combination of the society they are living in and certain 'within person' factors. These 'within person' factors, by nature of their dysfunctional outcome for the individual, can be seen as psychologically mal-adaptive and as such as mental health issues.

2.4 Adolescence And The Tension Between Different Models Of Social Structure

2.4.1 The Received Model Versus The Experienced Model

In Chapter 2.2.2.2 of this work, Contemporary Adolescence Revealed Through Research, reference is made to Fontana's (1991) suggestion that some of the difficulties adolescents experience are related as much to the artificial structures and expectations created by adult society as they are to inevitable and 'within-person' factors relating to intrinsic adolescent factors. This picture is made more complex still in a community such as the one under study (See Chapter 7.2). It is possible to postulate that there are at least four models of social structure which exist in tension with one another:

1. The idealised and aspired-to version that the government and society at large takes as its norm for planning purposes and reflects back at young people through establishment systems.
2. The version reflected in popular youth culture and which is likely to be more hedonistic, rebellious and nihilistic than the establishment version and to be disrespectful of or disinterested in the establishment version.
3. The social structures that aeons of evolutionary adaptations have best fitted adolescents for.
4. The reality that adolescents actually experience.

In the complex industrial/post industrial society of contemporary Britain young people are subject to tremendous pressures created by our laws, conventions and culture, especially relating to our educational system, social welfare provision and employment practices. These pressures conspire to create a certain idealised model of society. Contributing factors include:

- educational structures such as SATs examinations and National Curriculum levels with published norms and targets for pupils to reach at different ages. These all emphasise the value of academic achievement,
- the school leaving age and policies designed to address the 'problem' of pupils who avail themselves of the opportunity to leave school at 16,
- social security support for financially independent young people,
- news media reports about how easy GCSEs, A levels and degrees are nowadays and how everyone can get them,
- advertisements, celebrity, pop and soap opera images, often targeted at the young, that portray an idealised, consumer-rich lifestyle.

In this idealised and hypothetical model young people live out secure extended childhoods in functional two parent families with access to the full range of comforts, luxuries and support commensurate with the fifth richest economy in the world. From this secure and happy base pupils are enabled to take up an interesting and relevant education which, following GCSEs, A levels and a university degree, will render these young people well equipped to take their place in adult society and lead productive, rewarding, consumer-rich lives. Variations from this are viewed as variations from the norm and are therefore not as functional within the structures that exist.

Only a very little knowledge of reality and sophistication of thought is necessary to realise that if there is any truth in such an ideal model:

- it can not describe the reality for everyone, and probably not even for the majority,
- it is unlikely to be as fulfilling in the reality as it appears when it is held out as an aspiration, and
- the struggle to close or ignore the gap between this ideal model and reality is likely to cause unbearable tensions.

If there is likely to be a reality gap anywhere it is likely to be at its widest and most brutal in a deprived community like that which is the focus of this work. As will be established in Chapter 7 reality for many of the young people in the research area is likely to be characterised by personal, family or community experience of:

- Family break-up and instability,
- Education seen as boring and irrelevant,
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse,
- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse,
- Limited educational role models,
- Economic hardship and the concomitant poor clothing, malnutrition, poor health, poor housing,
- Standards of basic education that make GCSEs and employment unrealistic.

2.4.2 The Pressure To Become An Adult Versus The Pressure To Remain A Child

Working alongside the tension between the idealised model of adolescent development and the harsher reality of the society that many adolescents find themselves in is the added problem of evolutionary fitness and social demands. Although human societies have become infinitely more complex and demanding since the early days of human evolution 2.5 millennia or so ago, our physiological mechanisms for coping with the various stages, demands and adversities of life are fundamentally the same as they were then. Adolescent physiology develops and responds to demands in virtually the same manner now as it did to equivalent demands in our earliest ancestors. In practice this means that, regardless of the laws and expectations of society, when nutritional and general physical health levels reach a certain level human beings reach reproductive maturity.

In most European countries the age of onset of puberty and menarche has been decreasing during the past few decades. The duration of puberty seems also to decrease. Genetic and environmental factors, most particularly environmental factors, acting on the human characteristics which have been put into place over the millennia, contribute to these secular changes. Physically children are becoming reproductively and sexually mature adults earlier and earlier (de Muinck Keizer-Schrama and Mul, 2001). This phenomenon is recognised and exploited by a multi-billion pound commercial industry aimed at turning young people into sexualised consumers and which

reflects back at them a glamorous image of themselves as mature and sexually empowered.

Set against these pressures towards early adulthood are enormous social pressures to remain a child, where social and educational trends appear to be pushing against the physiological trends identified in Chapter 2.4.1. For example, notwithstanding the physiological trends regarding the earlier onset and duration of puberty, sexual autonomy – measured in terms of the age of sexual consent – has moved from age 12 to age 16 in the past century and permanent commitment through marriage is now typically in the mid to late twenties. Similarly, at the start of the twentieth century, education for the majority rarely extended much after the primary school years. At the start of the twenty-first century education is compulsory up to the age of 16, and common well into people's 20s. Government targets include 50% of 18 year olds moving on to higher education, with the range of higher education being extended to encompass both traditional academic studies and vocational qualifications to bring as many young people as possible into the sphere of higher and further education. This extended term of educational study effectively defers true financial independence for young people, contrasting both with pre-welfare state days, when there was an expectation for most people to earn their keep as early as possible, and with the pressures of commercial self-interest, seeking to emphasise young people in their role as fully-fledged consumers.

Today's young people thus find themselves trapped between the various social pressures to both remain in childhood longer and to assume adult roles earlier. This must be taken into account when considering the confusion that surrounds so many adolescents about their role in life.

CHAPTER 3 : THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT IDENTITY

3.1 The Development Of A Concept Of Self

The beliefs and attitudes that an individual holds about their identity (their self-concept) are central to their manner of understanding and interacting with the world and so to their behaviour. In attempting to understand an individual's behaviour it is necessary therefore to understand their self-concept, or in Piagetian terms their self-scheme. To understand this it is useful to consider how such a self-scheme is acquired and developed.

3.1.1 Subjective And Objective Self-Concepts

Both Freud and Piaget assumed that babies begin life with no sense of self. This assumption still informs most research in this area today (Bee, 1997). Hand in hand with the development of a sense of object permanence the infant starts to develop a sense of self-permanence; of self as a stable continuing entity. Lewis (1991) describes this growing sense of self as a two-part process. Firstly the infant begins to appreciate him or herself as separate from others and that this separate self endures over time and space. This is termed the 'subjective self'. This is usually established at about 9 to 12 months old.

Once this subjective self has been established the child is able to develop a sense of objective self. This objective self involves an appreciation of self, both as having an existence separate to that of others and also as an object that can be described and categorised according to the properties it possesses.

The concept of objective self is the basis of an individual's understanding of who they are. This develops and refines throughout childhood and adolescence. Montemayor and Eisen (1977) conducted a study into the development of self-concept in 9 to 18 year olds. At 9 years old children were mostly using concrete descriptors and surface qualities to describe themselves such as, 'My name is Helen, I have hazel eyes, I'm 9 years old'. By 11 years of age children had moved towards more comparative, complex descriptions of themselves, less tied to external features and more focussed on feelings, beliefs, ideas and general personality traits such as, 'I'm a truthful person, I'm not very pretty, I like several boys and several girls'. By 17 years old most adolescents had moved to much more abstract descriptors emphasising ideology such as, 'I don't know who I am. I am an individual and a loner. I am an atheist. I am an American (God help me) and a Democrat. I am not a classifiable person and I don't want to be.'

3.1.2 Comparative Assessments

Bee (1997) suggests that the child's increasingly comparative self-assessments are particularly visible in school and in academic performance and that this focus is replicated in the teachers' attitude to students. In nursery classes and Year 1 children pay little regard to how well they perform in relation to their peers and teachers tend to emphasise the individual's effort and work habits. At this age the majority of children in a class will describe themselves as good at drawing or good at building without reference to the relative accomplishments of their peers. By Year 3 children are becoming increasingly aware of whether or not their classmates have more or fewer corrections on their work than they do, are neater or less tidy writers or are faster or slower at tasks than they are and teachers use more comparative judgements.

Bee's (1997) work took place in the United States of America. In the United Kingdom, at about the same stage that psychological research such as Bee's suggests that children and teachers are becoming more focussed on comparative descriptors, there is an increasing reference to fixed educational standards and national norms through SATs and other reportable achievement data. Nearly every 7, 11 and 14 year old in the UK knows where they are predicted to come against government set standards in literacy, numeracy and science and then whether or not they have achieved this prediction. This will serve as a very powerful focus to the young person, reinforcing their perceived academic ability against what they believe to be the

norm. When the role of academic self-esteem in the self-concept of the subject population is considered in Chapter 10.2 of this work the comparative nature of self-concept in early adolescence should be borne in mind.

3.1.3 The Influence Of Gender On Self-Concept

There is an interesting gender aspect to the child's developing concept of self. In broad terms boys are much more likely to attribute their academic successes to their own ability and their failures to external factors such as unfair tests or poor teaching. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to attribute their failures to internal factors such as a lack of ability and their successes to factors such as having worked hard or, more externally, to easier tests and good teaching (Messer, 1972 and Nowicki & Strickland, 1973).

Exactly how this sex difference develops is not clear but studies in the US suggest that parents hold similar ideas to those of adolescents about the gender difference in attainment. Parents attribute their sons' successes to their innate ability and their failures to lack of application. They attribute their daughters' successes to them having worked hard and their failures to a lack of ability (Holloway & Hess,1985; Parsons, Adler & Daczala, 1982). It could be deduced from this that parents are reluctant to think of their sons as lacking in ability but are willing to see them as lazy or lacking in application. In contrast to this they are more willing to think of their daughters as lacking in ability but reluctant to consider that they lack application. Findings such as these echo beliefs held openly in society in earlier centuries about the lower intelligence of women, the greater appropriateness of educating males (see Wollstonecraft (1791) among many others) and the appropriateness for women to be obedient, industrious and compliant (Beauvoir, 1949; Salisbury

and Jackson, 1996). Such attitudes have not been recognised in official policy in western societies for some considerable time and indeed are outlawed by several United Nations devised international treaties signed, though not adhered to, by most of the world's governments (Seager, 2003).

Both the gender specific attributions of success and failure and the effect of the individual's belief in either a finite level of ability or an expanding ability component to their identity are taken up and expanded in both Chapter 5.4.5 and Chapter 10.6.

3.1.4 Adolescent Re-Evaluation Of Self

The rapid and dramatic physical changes, including sexual development that young people undergo during adolescence have a great impact on the individual's developing sense of self. Erikson (1980) theories that at adolescence there is a re-evaluation of the self, a process that Erikson describes as the 'identity crisis'. According to this theory adolescents move from a diffuse sense of future occupational or ideological identity, through a period of re-evaluation (moratorium) to a commitment to a new self-definition. In essence young people become increasingly aware that the old certainties and identities do not fit any longer. Their growing awareness of the myriad roles of adult life, coupled with the pressure exerted by the multitude of often conflicting social forces (see Chapters 2.2.2 and 2.4.1) leads to a dissatisfaction with the old identity of childhood and a period of confusion as a new identity is established. Erikson described this period as follows:

> *In general it is primarily the inability to settle to an occupational identity which disturbs young people. To keep themselves together they often over identify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds.....They become remarkably clannish, intolerant and cruel in their exclusion of others who are 'different'..... often in entirely petty aspects of dress and gesture arbitrarily selected as the signs of in-grouper or out-grouper. It is important to understand.....such intolerance as the necessary defence against a*

sense of identity confusion, which is unavoidable at this time of life.
(Erikson, 1980, pp. 97 – 98)

Ultimately each teenager must break away from this volatile group identity and acquire an integrated self-concept including their own pattern of beliefs, occupational goals and relationships. Hand-in-hand with the developing self-concept is the value system that each individual attaches to themselves, their self-esteem. This value system can be viewed as comprising two parts, the value the individual aspires to and that which they believe they achieve. The emotional support the young person perceives that they receive from their parents and peers is instrumental in shaping their developing self-esteem. For healthy development the discrepancy between the aspired value and the perceived value must not be too large. Self-esteem is considered in more detail in Chapter 5.4.4.

3.1.5 The Self Re-inforcing Nature Of A Concept Of Self

Although the process underlying the sense of self, the self-concept, and the accompanying self-esteem is still an area of research rich with unanswered questions there is an almost universal recognition of its significance to the individual (Bee, 1997). Once a child has a well-established theory of self and a global judgement of their self worth the reverberations of this understanding extend throughout the child's behaviour and development. Such an understanding informs the experiences the child seeks out, those it chooses to avoid and the environment it chooses to inhabit; strong preference being given to those which are consistent with existing belief about itself, its strengths and its weaknesses. This process then becomes much of a self-fulfilling prophecy as the child avoids those things it believes it can not do, perhaps even building up anxieties related to them thus limiting opportunities to develop its skills in those areas. In the light of the above it is easy to see how crucial an understanding of the child's beliefs about itself is to an understanding of its behavioural style, its learning style and the barriers it faces in developing these areas healthily.

3.1.6 The Window Of Opportunity

In terms of the practical research part of this work, identifying the potentially vulnerable adolescent and putting interventions in place to support them, this period of re-evaluation of self is the vital window of opportunity. Once established, self-concept and self-esteem in adults is believed to be a fairly stable phenomenon (Battle, 1992) broadly reverting to some pre-set level after the occasional peaks and troughs set off by environmental or circumstantial pressures. It is during these turbulent adolescent years when self-esteem is being re-examined and shaped by experience that intervention is likely to be most efficacious.

3.1.7 Culture And Personality Scales

The research examined for this work, both historical and contemporary, all comes from a western perspective; predominantly from the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. While at a general level it is felt that such western-biased research is relevant to the majority of the research population, in applying such findings at an individual level caution is advised. This chapter examines the need for care in assuming western values to personality constructs are applicable to all.

The vast majority of research available on personality and views of the self comes from a western perspective, a perspective which emphasises the

centrality of the individual and the independent self in identity formation (Hoare, 1991). Individuals judged as being self-directed, self-confident, having high self-esteem, demonstrating an internal locus of control and having a positive self-concept are viewed as healthy and successful in western culture. However, in more collective cultures (Hui, 1988) these same traits are viewed as unhealthy and isolating.

There appears to be general agreement that personality is influenced by a combination of nature and nurture, and that one strong determinant of nurture is culture (Ritts, 2001). To understand the personality and self-construals of other cultures it is necessary to understand the philosophical and religious underpinnings, traditional social structures, patterns of socialisation (for example child rearing) and economic systems (Yang, 1986).

A brief examination of different cultural attitudes to one of the constructs of this research; locus of control; can illustrate some of the dangers of assuming that all individuals value the same personal traits.

Western culture in general, and particularly U.S. culture where much of the cross-cultural research originates, values an internal locus of control. Individuals in western cultures tend to have higher internal scores on locus of control scales than Chinese, Japanese, (Hamid, 1994) Swedes (Lee and Dengerink, 1992) Zambians and Zimbabweans do (Munro, 1979). While western culture tends to place a high value on internal locus of control, Asian and other collective cultures tend to value an external locus of control. For

example, in Japan an external locus of control is valued and the Japanese accommodate to other people's needs and thus relinquish a sense of personal control (Ji, Peng, and Nisbett, 2000).

Chinese values are based on Confucian principles and Confucianism is closely related to the concept of locus of control. According to Confucian philosophy proper human relationships are the basis of society. Human beings are social by nature and bound to their peers by human heartedness in what are called five cardinal relationships, the relationships between;

- Father and son
- Minister and ruler
- Husband and wife
- Elder and younger brothers
- Friends

Based on this model, Confucianism stresses collective aspects of relationships to others, leading to an acceptance of fate and a belief that individuals have very little control over their environment (Yang, 1986). Cheung et al (1986) described a similar perspective among Hindu influenced cultures such as Indian culture.

The implications of the above research for locus of control as an indicator of vulnerability are discussed further in Chapter 5.4.5. Broadly, while an external locus of control is accepted as a reliable and valid measure of vulnerability in a society that expects and values people being in control of their own

destinies, in a different environment where this was not the case it would not necessarily identify the vulnerable within that society.

As is shown later in this research (Chapter 7.1) one ethnic minority community which is strongly represented in the research population is the Gypsy Traveller community. Unfortunately the paucity of psychological research data on this community seriously limits the ability to set the present research findings in their cultural context. This limitation is compounded by the frailty of government and local agency data collecting systems on the Gypsy Traveller community which means that while it is possible to say that a proportion of the sample population were almost certainly from this community (Chapter 7.1) it is not possible to identify or quantify this proportion. The above two points suggest that urgent attention to this area would be appropriate.

3.2 The Role Of Language In The Development Of A Concept Of Self

Any consideration of adolescent development would be wise to consider the mechanisms through which adolescents acquire, negotiate and reinforce their identities.

3.2.1 Language As A Social Police Force

To a large extent adolescent identity is created, validated and policed through language. Language is the system through which we make contact with, define and learn to make sense of the rest of the social world. As we come to understand more about the world around us so we come to see ourselves in relation to this world and to imagine how this world sees us (see Chapter 3.1 above on comparative self-assessments). The language system we use is shaped through cultural and historical factors strongly influenced by gender, class, region and race. One of the strongest effects of language on the development of adolescent identity is in the inculcation of the accepted social hierarchy and the individual's place in it. As dwellers in a patriarchal world where male control of language defines and controls both male and female awareness, it is no surprise that both men and women adopt a largely male shaped vocabulary and set of language norms (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). Thus both young males and females are likely to come to see themselves measured against some masculine norm, so replicating the society that they are a part of.

3.2.2 Inclusive And Exclusive Language

Language is used to make personal sense of the world, to interact with others and to foster closer contact but it is also used as a weapon to fend off others. This last use is particularly apparent in adolescence where the self is increasingly defined in terms of who it is not and attempts to justify this identity can become quite confrontational and defensive (see Erikson, 1980 quoted in section 3.1 above). Boys in particular develop and recognise their own identity as they start to define those others whom they wish to distinguish themselves from. In the world of the classroom and playground it is essential for boys to be seen as aggressively heterosexual and confident (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). This process both shapes their language and is shaped by their language.

3.2.3 Gender-Typical Language

As both sexes move through adolescence their language styles become closer and closer to those which are recognised as typical of their sex in adults (Beattie, 1983). Boys in group discussion situations find turn taking much harder than do girls, and in their eagerness to say their piece are much more likely to shout out and to interrupt. Such linguistic behaviour has a marked and negative affect on the ability of the girls, or the quieter less dominant boys, to contribute or participate. Such behaviour has a reinforcing effect on both dominant and less dominant speakers. The less dominant individuals (mostly, but not entirely, girls) find less and less chance to speak and then when they do they are frequently groaned at by the more dominant speakers. This has the effect of reinforcing their reluctance to speak (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996).

A further set of conversational features which is widely associated with gender differences, and is identified with reinforcing or perpetuating those differences, is that of direct versus conditional utterances. An examination of this difference and the reasons for it should shed some light on the differently developing identities of young males and females. As youngsters acquire speech both boys and girls start to make assertions or requests through the direct form. Children practise this form for some time until their developing linguistic confidence allows them to introduce the more sophisticated conditional. People who are slow at mastering cultural and social expectations are slower than their more verbally fluent peers at introducing

the conditional form into their speech (Beattie, 1983). Sometime during early adolescence males and females diverge in the relative incidence of these two forms in their speech. Various studies and anecdotal evidence (Coates and Cameron, 1988) suggest that women are more likely to hedge their conversation around with phrases like, 'It could be that...', 'maybe', 'possibly' or 'do you mind if...?'. Men on the other hand are more likely to make direct assertions. Coates and Cameron discuss possible explanations for this observed difference.

Firstly, it is proposed that men can be seen as decisive and positive, confident in their opinions and not afraid to voice them. Women are seen as indecisive hedge-sitters; unable to either make up their minds or voice their views out loud. These hedging devices are seen as reflecting the woman's oppressed and marginalised position. Parallels can be drawn between this view of developing male and female identities and the position of Salisbury and Jackson (1996) considered above. Young women are learning to be passive and submissive, young men to be confident, assertive and dominant.

A variation on this explanation is that women are simply socialised differently from men. A prime purpose of their conversations is to cement and maintain social relationships and so 'the joint working out of a group point of view takes precedence over individual assertions.' (Coates and Cameron 1988, p. 71). Hedging devices encourage co-operativeness by toning down assertions and so protecting the speaker and the addressee from a feeling of confrontation. They act as a social lubricant.

To voice an opinion as if it were written in stone is often to close one's mind to alternatives and to be inflexible. This is more likely to be a security device for the uncertain than a mark of strong conviction. On the other hand to hold most truths as provisional and to admit to their provisional status is to allow room for the consideration of new evidence. Rather than indicating a lack of commitment to their proposition these epistemic modal forms allow for a greater flexibility of thought. It would seem a more intelligent approach to life allowing for creativity, adaptation and imagination. Unfortunately, in a world where power is male and sound-bite rhetoric is becoming the favoured style it is possible that intelligence and broad-mindedness revealed through conditionals will be mis-identified as prevarication and lack of conviction.

This establishment of a linguistic pecking order, and learning of each individual's place within that order, reflects the general power structure young people are starting to see in the world around them. 'Just as male dominance is exhibited through male control of macro-institutions in society, it is also exhibited through control of at least part of the micro-institution.' (Zimmerman and West, 1975, p. 125).

In a male dominated society girls find themselves defined and regulated by a set of values which see them in terms of their relationship to men and male control of their lives (Lees, 1986). Girls are described as slags by both girls and boys and with seemingly little relationship to their actual sexual activity (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). In this climate, where they appear to be damned if they do and damned if they don't, many girls still struggle

desperately to please. The linguistic and behavioural styles girls adopt in the face of these pressures suggest that while the overt advice to adolescent girls might have changed over the years the girls themselves are still receiving the message put out by Mrs Dale Carnegie in 1953. She voiced the opinion that, 'The woman who has a receptive ear not only can provide great comfort and release for her husband ... she possesses a priceless social asset as well. The quiet, unpretentious woman who is fascinated by another's conversation, who asks questions which show she is digesting every word, is the girl most likely to succeed socially, not only with the menfolk, but also with her fellow females.' (Mrs. Dale Carnegie (1953) How To Help Your Husband Get Ahead)

3.3 The Development Of Sexual Identity

Central to an individual's understanding of who they are is their gender concept and their accompanying concept of sex roles. In most industrialised societies, including the United Kingdom, men's and women's roles have changed rapidly over a few short generations. Societal and individuals' sexual stereotypes and inner sense of what it means to be male or female have not always kept pace and the tension set up by this mismatch impacts on both individuals and society. This issue is discussed in relationship to the research population of this research in Chapter 10.2. At this stage it is appropriate to consider how children learn about gender and sex roles and acquire their own sense of how this relates to them.

3.3.1 Differences In Acquiring Male And Female Sex Role Concepts

By the time young people reach early adolescence, the age pertinent to this research, they have already laid down fairly rigid ideas about what it means to be either male or female. This understanding usually includes a sense of the behaviours, attitudes, rights, duties and obligations thought to be appropriate or typical to each sex. Interestingly, according to Bee (1997), in almost all countries studied this understanding of appropriate sex role is laid down earlier and is held more strongly for male roles than for female roles.

No clear explanation is given for the phenomenon of earlier and stronger male sex role identity; it could relate to the higher value given to perceived male qualities, leading to boys wanting to identify with this role more eagerly than girls' desire to be associated with the less prestigious and lower valued female qualities. Supporting evidence for this theory comes in Bee's assertion that girls who describe themselves as androgynous or masculine have somewhat higher self-esteem in U.S. culture than those who see themselves as having typically female characteristics. An alternative explanation, and one that echoes the evidence on female use of conditionals in Chapter 3.2, is the possibility that female roles are more flexible, encompassing as they often do the role of chief carer, teacher, nurse, worker etc. Male roles, being less ambiguous, are easier to understand and relate to and so are understood sooner. Whatever the process at play in the earlier and stronger development of male roles than female roles, that this is the case is doubtless significant in societies' greater tolerance of boyish girls than of girlish boys (Siegal, 1987).

This is a phenomenon which leaves the English language with the perfectly acceptable word 'tomboy' for girls whose behaviour encompasses more traditionally male aspects but with no equivalently affectionate and polite term for the male child counter-part. Over the past few decades terms like 'new man', and much more recently 'metro-sexual' have been coined for adult males, perhaps giving boys an aspirational role model with a more feminine side. Despite this, during adolescence the word 'gay' is still bandied around the playground as a term of abuse for boys who reveal sensitivities seen as female.

3.3.2 Models Of Sex Role Acquisition

Several theories exist to explain the mechanism through which sex role identity is acquired. Freud explained the young child's adoption of appropriate sex role behaviour in terms of identification with members of their own sex, starting with the same sex parent (Freud, 1940). There is little support for this theory in the work of subsequent researchers who have found that children begin to show clearly sex-typed behaviour long before the age at which Freud thought that this identification was possible. Several alternative theories of better fit exist.

Social Learning theorists such as Bandura (1977) emphasise the role of both direct reinforcement and modelling. Bandura argues that parents reinforce their children's same sex behaviour, fathers in particular reinforcing 'male' behaviour in their sons.

Cognitive Developmental theorists such as Kohlberg (1966) base their theories on Piagetian principles and emphasise the crucial role of the individual's understanding of the gender concept. Once the child realises that they will be a boy or a girl forever they become highly motivated to learn the role expected for that gender. This process can only take place *after* the child has achieved a concept of gender constancy.

Gender schema theory is an approach advocated by Martin (1991) among others and that appears to carry much support in more recent research. This

model has its roots in information processing theories of cognitive development as well as in Kohlberg's theory. Martin postulates that children begin to acquire a rule about what boys do and what girls do as soon as they begin to notice the difference, roughly age 2 to 3. From this time on each category acts as a kind of magnet for new information to cluster around the male or female concept. Particular interest is shown in information to add to the category 'what people like me do'. This clustering of attributes around a concept is very much the model proposed in Chapter 3.1 for the development of a concept of self.

3.3.3 Comparing Male And Female Identity

When defining their sexual identity adolescents of both sexes define themselves very clearly in terms of the sexual identity they do not have but this is not necessarily a symmetrical process. Dale Spender talks in terms of two sexes: male and minus male. Thus both boys and girls increasingly see their adolescence as a stage in which they either become more and more active and positive (male) or else increasingly 'deviant to the masculine norm' and so 'to be decidedly negative and usually sexually debased' (female) (Spender, 1985).

As this sexual identity develops so typical male behaviour and typical female behaviour diverge and can be more clearly identified. The typical boy is seen as coming to dominate the classroom, the playground and the world outside of school with a wide variety of attention seeking strategies. Both language and behaviour become aggressively heterosexual. Boys tend to become more boastful of their abilities and keener to talk down any educational difficulties they might have. Tests are described as 'easy' and low marks due to external factors such as an unfair system or more important things to be concerned with. In class boys call out answers more often and are more prepared to make guesses. Externally there is increasing pressure on boys to be seen as confident and nonchalant in their studies.

Girls on the other hand are typically seen as listening more passively and much more likely to express anxiety about their educational performance.

Low marks are more likely to be seen as a sign that they are lacking in ability (Stanworth, 1983) (see Chapter 3.1.3). Although both girls and boys are involved in, what must be for many of them, a charade they seem to convince themselves that the overt behaviour that they observe in the bulk of their classmates reveals the true state of affairs. Both boys and girls are left feeling that boys know so much more than girls in so many areas (Salisbury, 1988). This tendency is picked up again in Chapter 5.4.5 which considers perceived locus of control.

CHAPTER 4 : THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

4.1 The Development Of Social Relationships

As will be discussed in Chapter 4.2 the behaviour and emotional well-being of young people is inextricably bound up with the functionality of their social skills and friendship network. What is clear when looking at the social skills and friendship networks of adolescents, and is evident even in the few case studies examined in Chapter 9.6 of this research, is not just the variety of functional systems in place but also the great range in degrees of mastery of these skills that adolescents achieve. This section considers some of the factors involved in developing the skills prerequisite to forming stable and satisfying friendships and in conducting functional social relationships. Research evidence on statistically normal or functional development will be presented before a brief consideration of the ways in which this process can go wrong in an individual's life.

4.1.1 Two Major Types Of Social Relationship

Hartup (1989) described two distinct types of social relationship that a young child needs to experience to develop healthy and effective social skills. He distinguished between *vertical* and *horizontal* relationships. These two kinds of relationship serve different functions in the development of effective social skills but both are essential if the child is to develop into an emotionally healthy person.

Vertical relationships are the asymmetrical relationships a child forms with someone who has greater power or knowledge than they have, such as a parent, teacher or even an older sibling. These are complementary but not reciprocal relationships. An example of this asymmetry is evident when the child bids for attention. The adult does not respond with a matching bid for attention but provides the nurturance that the child requires. Vertical relationships provide the child with security and protection. Within them the child is safe to create basic internal working models and to learn and practise fundamental social skills. These are the earliest relationships a child experiences, developing over the first few months of life into secure attachments (Bowlby, 1969). There are deep evolutionary and ethological roots to this behaviour in that it is central to the survival of the young and vulnerable infant. Consequently 'the propensity to make strong emotional bonds to particular individuals [is] a basic component of human nature, already present in germinal form in the neonate.' (John Bowlby, 1988, p3).

Satisfactory attachments in vertical relationships seem to be essential to the subsequent formation of all successful and secure relationships.

Horizontal relationships on the other hand are formed between equals and both parties choose their behaviours towards one another from the same repertoire. Horizontal relationships, in friendships and peer groups, provide the opportunities for the child to practise social behaviours and to acquire and practise those social skills that can only be learned in a relationship between equals: co-operation, competition and intimacy. They become increasingly important after the age of 2 years old when they start to develop through common activities. By the time children reach upper Primary school age they have strong and marked preferences for certain other children and their friendships fill a prime role in their lives. Playing with their friends, along with watching television, takes up virtually all their time when they are not at school, eating or sleeping (Timmer, Eccles and O'Brien, 1985).

As young people enter adolescence there is less emphasis on shared interests and activities and more on shared attitudes and appearance (O'Brien and Bierman, 1988). At around this time conformity to the peer group values and behaviours increases and parents' influence on the child starts to wane. Teenagers spend more than half their waking time with other teenagers and less than 5 percent of their time with either parent. Friendships become increasingly intimate with more emphasis on sharing inner feelings and secrets. Qualities of loyalty and faithfulness become more strongly valued. This move from the concrete to the more ideological is consistent both with

the theories on the development of self-concept outlined in Chapter 3.1 and also with Piagetian theories about the thinking processes of children at the concrete operational stage.

Horizontal relationships, as epitomised by friendships, hold a seminal role in the emotional well-being and social development of individuals.

4.1.2 The Development of Social Cognition And Empathy

The ability to read, analyse, understand, predict and act on the feelings, intentions and emotions of others is probably the single most important aspect of cognition for successful social existence. The development of these skills, that is skills of social cognition and of empathy, is closely related to the stage the child has reached in the development of overall cognitive skills (Flavell et al, 1995). Thus the developmental stage that a child has reached in understanding the world in general will be reflected in the sophistication they can bring to their social relationships and friendships. The more highly developed an individual's ability to empathise the more successful they are likely to be socially (Cotton, 2001).

This chapter considers the development of social cognition and empathetic skills and the relationship between these skills and an individual's social and emotional vulnerability.

Despite the close relationship between overall cognitive development and the development of social cognition there is one major difference that a child has to come to appreciate between its understanding of the physical world and its understanding of the social world, that is the issue of *intention*. In relating to other people, unlike in relating to a toy or other object, the child must consider and be able to predict with some degree of accuracy concepts such as:

- The possibility of deception. Human beings can conceal facts about themselves and their emotional state.
- The mutual and reciprocal nature of relationships between humans. They could be met with anger, distress, embarrassment, pleasure or any other emotional response.
- The range of social registers expected in different social situations. Children need to learn about rules of politeness, social hierarchies and power dominances and many other social scripts.

(Harris et al, 1981)

The development of social cognition and empathy as individuals move from birth to full adult social functioning is a theme which runs throughout this research and is picked up both explicitly and implicitly over and over again. It is a theme which underpins;

- the infants' emerging ability to distinguish between individuals and identify those of importance to him or her
- the infants' emerging ability to use facial expressions and other body cues for social referencing
- the pre-school child's growing understanding of, and understanding of the importance of, others' emotions as it develops a theory of mind
- the development of an internal working model of attachment
- the development of a self-scheme
- the move from an emphasis on concrete, observable and surface characteristics to more abstract, internal or ideological ones

- the move from a desire to categorise and understand things through a fairly rigid set of rules and absolutes to the ability to hold provisional, qualifiable truths and subtleties.

In order to empathise with someone it is necessary to both apprehend the other person's emotional state or condition and to match that state oneself. In other words an empathising person experiences the same feelings, or very similar feelings, that he or she imagines the other person to be feeling. This is a similar phenomenon to, and possibly a precursor to, sympathy; the difference being that sympathy involves apprehending another person's emotional state or condition and then feeling sorrow or concern rather than matching the state (Eisenberg et al., 1989).

In order to read another person's feelings we need to have some mastery in understanding and interpreting social context, facial expression and general body language. In a very broad sense children have acquired the rudiments of these three 'languages' by the age of 4 or 5 years old, but this is quite a crude approximation and the responses elicited not very sophisticated. Hoffman (1982 and 1988) describes the development of empathy as a four-stage process. Under this model individuals do not acquire sophisticated skills of empathy until late childhood or early adolescence.

Several research studies indicate a clear correlation between an individual's ability to read others' intentions, their social cognition, and their popularity. In one of these Dodge, Murphy and Buchsbaum (1984) showed a series of video tapes to children in kindergarten (nursery classes, predominantly three year olds), second grade (Year 2, predominantly six year olds) and fourth grade (Year 4, predominantly 8 year olds). Each tape showed a child destroying another child's toy, but with varying intent. On one tape the destruction was clearly hostile, on another an accident, another was ambiguous and a fourth was pro-social as the child knocked down another child's tower of bricks as part of assisting to clear up the toys. In each age group the popular children were clearly the most adept in judging the actor's intent and the rejected and neglected children the least adept. Interestingly the neglected and rejected children were more likely to see hostile intent when it was not present.

Studies such as this do not indicate whether the child becomes unpopular because it sees hostility where it does not exist or whether the child sees hostility in situations, which are otherwise ambiguous, because it has been rejected so often before. There is also some evidence to suggest that children who have experienced harsh discipline from their parents are quicker to see hostility in others (Weiss et al, 1992).

Whatever the causal direction, and it is likely to be rather a two-way one, once such a hostile attributional bias has been established it affects all of the child's subsequent relationships. For example, when children join new

groups those who begin the new social interactions with an assumption of hostility are more likely to be rejected by their new associates (Dodge et al., 1984). Additionally, when highly aggressive children are given training specifically designed to reduce their hostile attributional bias their level of aggression declines (Hudley and Graham, 1993). Studies such as these have very significant real life application.

4.1.3 Sex Differences In Friendships

One striking characteristic of children's friendships, and one that seems to hold true for children of all cultures, is how sex segregated they become. From the age of 3 or 4 years old children show a preference for same sex friendships, but as they go through the Primary school years these preferences become much more marked until by upper Primary school there are very few mixed sex friendships (Cairns and Cairns, 1994). Through adolescence mixed sex groups begin to reappear moving towards mixed sex (or occasionally homosexual) pairings from mid adolescence onwards. The move towards young people identifying as part of a couple is highly culturally dependent but research in the United States (Thornton, 1990) suggests that it starts to take place from around the age of 15 onwards.

There are also different typical patterns of friendship, shared activity and interaction between the two sexes. Benenson (1994) reports that boys tend towards larger groups of friends, are more accepting of new comers and tend to play outdoors more and to roam over larger areas. Their friendships seem to be focused more on competition and dominance than girls' friendships are. Boys are more competitive with their friends than they are with strangers. Their speech towards their friends contains more rejecting comments, ordering, manipulation, challenging, defiance, refutation or resistance of the other's attempt to control (see Chapter 3.2 The Role Of Language In The Development Of A Concept Of Self).

Girls on the other hand tend to favour more exclusive friendships of pairs or small groups. Their area of play is more likely to be indoors or close to their home or school. In contrast to boys' inter-friendship behaviour girls are less competitive overall and less competitive towards their friends than they are towards strangers. Friendships between girls include more compliance, agreement and self-disclosure than is true for boys (Leaper, 1991).

Waldrop and Halverson (1975) describe boys' relationships as *extensive* and girls' as *intensive.* Whilst it seems clear that there are distinct differences in both form and function between typical male and typical female friendships, and that female friendships are often more intense, there is no evidence to suggest that boys' friendships are less important to boys than girls' friendships are to girls.

4.1.4 The Function Of Friendships

The changing patterns of friendships over the years and between sexes are not just arbitrary. They fulfil essential developmental functions. In the early years children have a prime need for a setting in which they can learn about the world and practise emerging social interactions. Playing alongside others moving to mutual play provides a good structure for this exploration to take place. As the child grows into an adolescent and eventually into an adult it needs increasing opportunities to acquire the skills and the confidence necessary to make the transition from the secure home setting into an independent existence. These skills include a secure sense of identity, some degree of self-reliance and good social interaction skills to enable them to negotiate independently with the outside world. The move towards mixed sex groups and on to intimate pairings and dating, which happens in adolescence, provides the opportunity to practise, refine and experience pre-sexual skills such as personal intimacy, flirting, intimate communication, and reading the form of social cues used by the other gender.

4.2 Dysfunctional Development Of Social Relationship Skills

What has been described above is the 'ideal' model by which social relationships develop. By and large the majority of children move towards increasing degrees of altruism, less and less aggression and greater intimacy, in their relationships with their peers as they go through childhood and adolescence. At the same time they become increasingly independent from their parents (Erwin, 1993).

In the real world there are clearly many and enormous differences in the ways in which individuals conduct their friendships and acquire their social skills. For a variety of reasons, some within child, some environmental and many a complex mixture of both, some individuals end childhood without the subtle, complex but crucial skills in their social relationships that will serve them well throughout their adulthood. Leaving aside children who do not want friends or who are unable to make friends because of external, environmental factors such as geographical isolation there is still a core of children who would like friends, operate in a social environment surrounded by potential friends, but are unable to make them. These children might experience friendship difficulties as the result of their social skill and behaviour deficiencies or in relation to the reaction they elicit in others. The implications of such mal-formed social skills have a direct relevance for later psychological health and social adjustment (Erwin, 1993) some of which are discussed below and in Chapters 5.4.2 and 10.9.

Some of the possible causes and explanations for such dysfunction include:

i. Language and communication difficulties

ii. Children who are physically or developmentally atypical

iii. Shyness

iv. Neglect

v. Rejection

vi. Loneliness

vii. Children who are from minority groups within their community

Causal explanations for mal-formed social and friendship skills represent an enormous area of research and largely beyond the scope of this work. Something of the dynamics of each of the above seven possible foci of research into this area will be considered below.

4.2.1 Language And Communication Difficulties

Pupils with language and communication difficulties suffer from a particular disadvantage in the initiating, executing and maintaining of positive social interactions and relationships, (Cooper and Anderson-Inman, 1988). These communication difficulties could be at the level of the physical production of intelligible speech or involve difficulties in the comprehension or processing of normal verbal interchanges.

Rubin (1982) associates lower verbal maturity with children being rejected by their peers. Marion Farmer (1997) examined the link between social competence and communication skills. Her work involved looking at children with specific language impairment and comparing their social competence with that of a group of normally developing children. Drawing on the work of Asher and Gottman (1981), she suggests that clear connected communication, successful information exchange, establishment of common-ground play, exploration of similarities and differences, amicable resolution of conflicts and self-disclosure are key conversational processes at the heart of friendship. Thus communicative skill is a key component in the establishing and maintaining of friendships. Farmer uses the work of Cooper and Anderson-Inman (1988), to show that amongst mainstream school pupils communicative competence correlates with social competence and acceptance. In the light of this research it might be reasonable to assume that the children with specific language impairment that Farmer looked at would fare particularly badly in social relationships. Their

difficulties would appear to compound themselves in a negative spiral as poor language limits social interaction, and limited social interaction limits opportunities to improve language skills. Despite these findings Farmer concludes that whilst this holds true for many children with specific language impairment, some children with considerable language impairment, for reasons which the current research is unable to explain, are accepted by their peers and display considerable social competence. As Farmer concludes, this appears to be an area where a great deal more research is necessary.

4.2.2 Children Who Are Physically And Developmentally Atypical

A great body of research exists (Erwin, 1993) linking popularity with physical attractiveness. What is physically pleasing to an individual depends a great deal on cultural and historical factors. Certain constants such as factors suggesting good health (clear skin, upright posture), symmetry of form, in females a tendency towards a 'baby-faced' or childlike appearance (large eyes, small features and small chin) and in males suggestions of physical fitness and strength hold true for most societies.

Throughout history physical appearance has been linked with personality and used as a short-hand for ideas of good and evil. The author Roald Dahl makes the witches in his stories old and ugly, fairies young and pretty (Dahl, 1983); Shakespeare knew his story would have more impact if Richard III (Shakespeare, late 1500) had a physical deformity, and phrases like 'narrow shifty eyes' are commonplace.

The size of the beauty and cosmetic industry, the values of the film industry and the preoccupations of the advertising industry bear witness to the importance physical beauty and an 'ideal form' has in our lives. Erwin (1993) suggests that even extremely young infants can discriminate between, and show a preference for, physically attractive faces. According to Erwin the effects of physical attractiveness on social relationships and friendship formation are at work from birth. 'Cute' babies receive more positive feedback to their social overtures than their less attractive peers. This

process continues throughout childhood (indeed throughout life), shaping an individual's experience, self-image and learned behaviour. Patzer (1985) lists three highly visible characteristics by which individuals can be stereotyped and categorised; sex, race and physical attractiveness. Patzer argues that of these three factors discrimination on the grounds of physical attractiveness is the most marked although least acknowledged. It is interesting to note that of these three factors it is the most important one that people do not have protection from discrimination through legislation.

The irony and tragedy of basing our value judgements on such a system is that apart from a little tinkering around the edges (personal hygiene and grooming), most of us can do nothing about the physical form we present to the world, or about the way the world sees our physical form. Whilst such factors have a marked effect on the social lives of all of us, the impact of the experiences of those children with gross, multiple or just highly visible physically atypical appearances is enormous. The seriousness or limitations of the physical disability itself are not so relevant as the visibility of the condition. Children with disfiguring skin complaints, which might not impair their functioning at all, might well experience more negative reactions than those with more serious but less visible conditions (Hill-Beuf and Porter, 1984).

As the face is one of the main channels of non-verbal communication disfigurement here is particularly significant (Argyle, 1988). Richardson et al. (1961) found obesity, then facial disfigurement and then limb abnormalities

to be the most stigmatised forms of physical appearance. This finding has been confirmed by later research (Giancoli and Neimeyer, 1983) who conclude that the further away from the face a 'disfigurement' is the greater an individual is liked.

4.2.3 Shyness

Shyness in children is a relatively under-researched developmental phenomenon (Erwin, 1993). Cheek et al. (1986) defined shyness as "the tendency to be tense, worried and awkward during social interactions with strangers, casual acquaintances, and persons in a position of authority". Assendorpf (1986) saw shyness as "an ambivalent affective state" where an individual is torn between attraction towards interaction and wariness of it. As with so many personality traits shyness forms a continuum from the slightly withdrawn child whose behaviour can be seen to be functional, "normal and adaptive to the extent that it allows situations to be assessed before the child ventures forth and commits him or herself to a course of action" (Zimbardo and Radl, 1981), to the extremes where the shy child can be seen as part of a clinical population suffering from a severe and incapacitating disorder. There are self-esteem implications here in that such children consider themselves not worth caring for and "rather than acting so as to gain approval, the shy person acts so as to minimise disapproval." (Zimbardo and Radl, 1981).

In many children and adults shyness is not a fixed personality trait but rather a factor which is present at certain developmental or situational stages in their lives. Rubin, Hymel et al. (1991) suggest that shyness and passive isolation become increasingly stable characteristics of the individual with age. Whilst this finding must be treated with caution it would suggest that early signs of shyness should be monitored sensitively by the adults around

a child so that gentle and low level interventions can be made should the situation appear to warrant them. It would appear that the longer such a situation persists the more difficult such intervention might be.

4.2.4 Neglect

Neglected children are those to whom there is little or no actual antipathy but who are just overlooked by their peers when playmates are considered. Sociograms (Sherman, 2000 and McIntyre, 2003) conducted among school children frequently show that there are some children who are quite liked by their classmates when these classmates are questioned but are never actively chosen as friends. Studies into neglected children are inconclusive but preliminary research suggests that this is not necessarily a stable situation over time and that at different periods in the children's development and as situational factors change the degree of neglect such children experience can both wax and wane (Cillessen et al., 1992). There does seem to be some evidence however that such children are more prone to depression and loneliness than are accepted children.

4.2.5 Rejection

Rejected children are those who are actively avoided as friends. Children are rejected by their peers for a variety of reasons. Asher and Williams, (1987) and others cited in Ramsey (1991) describe two types of child who are rejected; the aggressive-rejected and the withdrawn-rejected. It is important to note that, unlike the neglected child, the rejected child (particularly the aggressive-rejected child) is not isolated and might not experience significantly fewer social inter-actions than the popular child. The difference is in the quality rather than the quantity of these interactions; the rejected child's interactions are most usually of a negative nature.

The aggressive-rejected child is characterised by pervasive aggressive behaviour that includes both verbal and physical attacks on peers. Such children are typically impulsive and, interpreting others' words and actions as being attacks on them react aggressively and lash out. If questioned they will describe their behaviour as defensive rather than aggressive and as having been provoked by the actions of others. Understandably the peers of such children learn to avoid and reject them causing further frustration for the child. Aggressive-rejected children are usually male.

The withdrawn-rejected child's problems may stem from a variety of underlying factors but frequently something (race, physical appearance, speech, etcetera) marks them as different from the majority of their peers and it seems that they are rejected on these grounds. Withdrawn-rejected

children are equally likely to be male or female and are less visible and disruptive in the classroom than aggressive-rejected children, thus making their difficulties more likely to be overlooked. Such children soon learn that they are rejected by their peers and so cease to offer themselves to social situations. They come to perceive themselves negatively with obvious implications for their self-esteem and mental well-being.

4.2.6 Loneliness

The lonely child, as described by Erwin (1993) is a child who wishes for positive social inter-actions that they do not have. Indeed, rather than being a separate category of child, loneliness is perhaps more usefully viewed as a feeling experienced by many of the children in the above groups. Lonely children might not take the initiative in social relationships for reasons such as lack of self-esteem and confidence, lack of social skills, past experience of rejection or situational reasons such as lack of opportunity. Alternatively they might attempt to initiate social inter-action but for some reason these advances are dysfunctional, counter-productive, rejected or ignored.

The issues surrounding loneliness are a well researched area in late adolescents and adults, but have suffered from relative neglect in the child population due to a belief that the sophistication of emotional and cognitive development necessary to experience loneliness is not developed until a person reaches adolescence. It appears to be true that loneliness peaks in adolescence (Brennan, 1982) but Rubin asserts that while the experience "may differ in its details from the loneliness of adolescents or adults, I believe that we are talking about the same basic experience." (Rubin, 1982, page 266)

4.2.7 Children From Minority Groups

Positive assortment, that is the attraction people feel towards people with similar characteristics and attributes to themselves, is a well researched and established principle in studies of friendship (McPherson et al, 2001). Children, like adults, feel a natural affinity towards individuals who share key characteristics and seek out such individuals in friendship. McPherson et al (2001) listed these key characteristics in descending order of priority as; race and ethnicity, age, religion, educational standing, occupation and gender. He claimed that these same characteristics were remarkably similar across many cultures and groups of people, including children, and had remained fairly constant over time.

The corollary of such research is that children who find themselves in a community in which they represent a minority group, by virtue of their race and ethnicity, age, religion, regional accent, educational standing (occupation) or gender frequently experience difficulty in establishing and maintaining friendship networks with the majority group. Children who have limitations placed on their communications because of sensory impairments are also at risk of isolation. Moving house and school is a particularly common yet often traumatic experience during childhood and can lead to children being, or feeling themselves to be, geographically and socially isolated.

CHAPTER 5: VULNERABILITY, VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES

This chapter will make explicit the link between vulnerability (as defined for the purposes of this research), the research variables and the hypotheses. It will do this through sections which:

- Define the concept of 'vulnerability' as it applies to this research (Chapter 5.1 Defining Vulnerability).
- Review the phenomena of social deprivation, alienation and exclusion and the government initiatives intended to address them in their various manifestations affecting the life chances of those young people affected by them (Chapter 5.2 Social Deprivation, Alienation And Exclusion).
- Review the impact of cultural and ethnic considerations affecting vulnerability and the possible indications of vulnerability (Chapter 5.3 The Impact Of Cultural And Ethnic Status On Vulnerability).
- Consider a range of possible research variables that could have been chosen as indicators of vulnerability and justify the choices that were made (Chapter 5.4 From Vulnerability To Research Variables).
- Demonstrate how the understanding of vulnerability used in this research and the variables chosen as indicators of that vulnerability led to the six hypotheses (Chapter 5.5 Identifying The Hypotheses).

5.1 Defining Vulnerability

Chapter 2.2 explores the nature of and establishes the prevalence of social and emotional disturbance through the years of adolescence. As previous research has shown, for many adolescents this period of turbulence is a normal function of the adolescent years and is left behind on entering adulthood. As is also shown, for a core of individuals, such difficulties leave a mark which lasts well into adulthood, frequently blighting lives permanently (Dept of Health, 1992).

Fontana (1991) describes an interactionist model of adolescence and society where the adolescents' experience of social and emotional dysfunctions and the kind of society they are operating in are inextricably linked. There is a great deal of evidence to support the view that certain individuals have a greater predisposition than other, more robust, individuals do to falling victim to the dysfunctional experiences and behaviours that disproportionately characterise disadvantaged communities (Department of Health, 1992; Samaritans, 2000; Kurtz et al, 1995).

While it appears that there will always be a core of individual adolescents experiencing social and emotional dysfunctions, when the background social circumstances are peculiarly disadvantaged the number of such adolescents and the severity of their dysfunctional experiences will be greatly increased (Community Development Unit, 2000; WHO, 1990; Department of The Environment, 2000; Kurtz et al, 1995).

For the purposes of this thesis vulnerability is defined as the presence or prevalence of a specific range of mental health difficulties:

- Serious lack of self esteem
- Feelings of powerlessness in shaping life
- Severe and chronic unhappiness
- Disaffection or underachievement socially or academically, and
- Lack of success in coping with the demands of adolescent life

against a background acknowledged to be disadvantaged (Department of The Environment, 2000). These factors combine to create a pre-disposition to a range of social and emotional dysfunctional experiences and behaviours, which include:

- Low school attendance and/or premature withdrawal from formal education;
- Low educational and employment related skills;
- Poor employment prospects;
- Criminal behaviour;
- Substance abuse/dependency;
- Teenage pregnancy;
- Prostitution and other sexual exploitation;
- Homelessness;
- Self-harm and suicide;
- Health problems associated with poverty, disadvantage and self-neglect.

5.2 Social Deprivation, Alienation And Exclusion

Any consideration of factors of vulnerability such as poverty, social exclusion, deprivation or any of the numerous related concepts and terms must first consider the issue of relative wealth and poverty within the community under consideration. In societies with a relatively 'flat' economic distribution, such as Cuba, or where vast numbers of the population live outside of a money economy, such as in many parts of rural Vietnam, the experience of absolute poverty, that is of having extremely small amounts of money to spend, will be qualitatively entirely different from the experience of living at the same economic level in a community that is characterised by consumer culture such as the U.K. or the U.S.A. The support network and infra-structure, as well as the individual's personal reference points and concept of their place in a social hierarchy, in a society where self-sufficiency or bartering are accepted and expected will not be the same as in a society where the official or most dominant image is of a life style characterised by goods and services which are beyond that individual's reach or experience.

During the 1980s the gap between the incomes of the wealthiest members of the population of the United Kingdom and the poorest widened faster than in any other country which kept comparable data. The mid 1990s saw the inequality in the income of the population reach a point that was greater than at any time since the 1940s. Recent research comparing inequality of affluence in childhood in 31 countries showed England to have the sixth greatest difference between the most and least disadvantaged children

(Woodward, 2003). The gap between the general quality of life, as measured on a variety of indices, for the most advantaged and the least advantaged sections of the community grew hand in hand with this increase in inequality of income.

Evidence of the impact of this growing inequality of opportunity on the educational chances of children was presented to the Liberal Democrats by their education spokesman, Phil Willis on April 23rd 2003 (Woodward, 2003). The proportion of students on free school meals is the most widely recognised indicator of the affluence of a school's intake. Drawing on recent research Willis reported that in the 100 schools with the highest percentage of pupils on free school meals 29% of students gained five Cs or more at GCSE. This is just over half of the 50% national average. These same schools have 31.9% of pupils with special educational needs, well above the 19.6% national average. At the other end of the income scale the 100 schools with the smallest number of students on free school meals achieve twice the national average in GCSE results with 93% of students achieving five Cs or above and averaging 5.4% of children with special educational needs. Evidence such as this points clearly to the links between poverty and educational attainment.

As an awareness of this growing polarisation between an increasingly affluent section of society, with commensurate gains in life expectancy, general health, education etcetera, and an increasingly disadvantaged section of society, several new terms entered the vocabulary of political,

educational and psychological literature to cover the phenomena. 'Social inclusion', 'social exclusion', 'social alienation' and 'disaffection', terms previously largely confined to sociology text books, became common on the lips of politicians and in the titles of Government reports.

Over the last five years Government initiatives and an enormous amount of UK government and European government money have been targeted at initiatives with words like, 'social exclusion' and 'disaffection' in their titles or their brief. Examples of these include:

- Education Action Zones and Early Excellence Centres; a government initiative identifying 73 areas of the country on the basis of social and economic disadvantage. It consists of three to five year programmes supporting school improvement through partnership between schools and the wider community. Each Education Action Zone area is jointly funded by the government and local business by up to one million pounds a year.

- Single Regeneration Budget: a government budget targeted at regeneration activities in England carried out by local groups. Its stated aim is 'to improve the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between deprived and well off areas, and between the less and better off groups of people. This includes addressing the disadvantage met be ethnic minority communities.' (Office of The Deputy Prime Minister, 2004)

- Social Inclusion: Pupil Support. This provides draft guidance on the law and good practice on school attendance, behaviour and discipline, exclusion, re-integration and education outside school

- New Start. This is a strand of the 'Investing In Young People' strategy aimed at raising the participation and achievement levels of 16 to 18 year olds.

- Local Partnership projects. This is an initiative aimed at drawing together existing initiatives such as various Educational, Health and Social Services with the aim of tackling disaffection.

One of the major such initiatives is the Social Exclusion Unit set up in December 1997 with a remit to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined-up solutions to joined-up problems'. The range of their interest can be seen in the titles of their five key reports:

- Truancy and School Exclusion
- Rough Sleeping
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Bridging The Gap: New Opportunities For 16 – 18 Year Olds Not In Education, Employment Or Training.

The broad range of areas covered by these initiatives illustrates the inter-relatedness of the many aspects of social deprivation. As Bee (1997)

finds, poverty reduces options for parents such that children living in poverty tend to have fewer and more irregular child-care arrangements, fewer opportunities for employment and a background of higher unemployment, smaller and less adequate housing, frequently in decaying neighbourhoods with above average rates of burglary and violence, poorer healthcare facilities, and more frequent moves of house and school. The Mental Health Foundation (1999) similarly identifies a range of risk factors in the community, family and child that have been identified as increasing the likelihood of a child developing mental health problems. These include homelessness, socio-economic deprivation, family breakdown and low self-esteem. This work then draws attention to the broad overlap between the risk factors predicting mental health difficulties and those indicating the likelihood of poor educational outcomes and anti-social behaviour. Thus, whilst poverty, unemployment and bad housing do not in themselves produce inadequate parents, the pressures of poverty make good parenting more difficult. The resultant adverse impact on children of this concentration of disadvantage includes worse health and educational outcomes, and a greater likelihood of mental health difficulties in later life.

It is not easy to find one all encompassing and sufficient definition of the various terms relating to social deprivation and exclusion. For practical purposes this research will set out the definition used by the Local Education Authority in which this research is set on their draft discussion document, Social Inclusion. This work, quoting from a Scottish Office publication, describes social exclusion as a shorthand label for 'what can happen when

individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.' (Scottish Office,1999) These factors are seen as both connected and mutually reinforcing.

5.3 The Impact Of Cultural And Ethnic Status On Vulnerability

Shalini Pathak's report for the DFEE (Pathak, 2000) on ethnicity and education explores something of the complexity of linking educational disadvantage and under achievement with ethnicity. Clear evidence is presented to show the relative disadvantage experienced by certain ethnic groups, starting in early education, continuing through further and higher education and persisting into the labour market. Despite the strength of the evidence of disadvantage Pathak's report concludes with a strongly worded caution against drawing too simple conclusions from this evidence. It stresses the heterogeneity that exists within the ethnic population in Great Britain, pointing to the wide variation in experience not just between different ethnic groups but also within each group.

According to Pathak, Indian and Chinese students can be seen to have both improved their educational and employment position over the years and also to be achieving well in relation to the white population. Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils achieve significantly less educationally than other groups and fare far worse in both the employment market and in terms of social and financial standing. Thus, in both cases, educational attainment would be seen to be linked, through a positive correlation, to employment and wider adult opportunities. This contrasts markedly with the situation seen in the Black African community where, despite being relatively well qualified educationally, individuals are not receiving commensurate rewards in the labour market. For this group educational attainments do not appear

to equate to career success or financial reward. Once again the inter-relationship of the various factors that might be at work here (racial prejudice on the part of the host community or a whole raft of within community and situational factors) is described as extremely complex, confusing and unclear on the present evidence.

Other factors that confound the data on ethnicity and educational attainment include the number of years in Great Britain (first, second or subsequent generations) neighbourhood deprivation, low family income, high family unemployment, ill health in the community, low family English skills and qualifications. Further, Pathak points out, high numbers of students from ethnic minorities live in geographically disadvantaged locations such as major cities. For these and other reasons Pathak concludes that the current evidence linking ethnic status, educational attainment and social disadvantage is not sufficient for conclusions to be drawn and calls for further research and analysis to investigate the situation and to enable effective social policy to be formulated.

5.3.1 The Gypsy Traveller Community

One ethnic group Pathak's report omits is the Gypsy Traveller community. Gypsy Travellers, although one of the United Kingdom's most ancient and numerically large ethnic minorities, are frequently one of the most overlooked communities in ethnic profiling. Trawling for data on the Gypsy

Traveller community reveals that Education Authorities, National Health Service Trusts and Government censuses, all of which keep ethnic profile data, do not report Gypsy Travellers except in the category of 'other'. As discussed in Chapter 7.1, consideration of the Gypsy Traveller community is highly pertinent to this research.

Traditionally Gypsy Traveller families have had clearly identified attitudes towards education. These attitudes are often antagonistic to DfES policy and suspicion and bad feeling has built up on both sides. Although DfES figures suggest that an increasing number of Gypsy Traveller children are accessing primary education attendance figures are often very low as the itinerant lifestyle is not conducive to continuity of schooling. Frequently Gypsy Traveller families have considered education within the family to be more appropriate for their children from puberty onwards. This is justified both in relation to the kind of education seen as appropriate and also as a way of protecting their young people from what are seen as dysfunctional and undesirable influences in the wider community. There can be little doubt that such attitudes towards education would have direct and great influence on the progress of young people from this community through school. (Traveller Education Services, Doncaster Borough Council, 2004; DfES, 2003)

This research sets out to identify young people vulnerable to a range of disadvantageous life chances. Chapter 5.1 defined the concept of vulnerability used in this research. As with many distinct cultural and ethnic

minority groups Gypsy Traveller communities can be seen as inhabiting a community within a community. Consequentially the dynamics of Fontana's model, of inextricable links between adolescents' experiences of dysfunction and the society they are operating in (Fontana, 1991, see Chapter 5.1, this thesis), assumes a greater complexity in ethnic and cultural minority communities than it does for the majority community. This can best be illustrated by reviewing the list of undesirable outcomes for adolescents cited in Chapters 2.3.3.3 and 5.1 against data available for Gypsy Traveller communities.

5.3.1.1 Low School Attendance And/Or Premature Withdrawal From Formal Education. Low Educational And Employment Related Skills And Poor Employment Prospects

Sixty one per cent of Gypsy Traveller school age children are registered on school rolls, the majority in primary schools. Among those who are on a school roll school attendance is extremely low. Gypsy Traveller pupils achieve below the level of all other ethnic minority groups in tested areas, particularly in formal reading tests (Weber, 1998).

Gypsy Traveller communities have a strong tradition of self-employment with an emphasis on flexibility and mobility and the family as the prime unit of employment (Gentleman, 1993). Additionally, Kendrick and Bakewell (1995) describe the Gypsy Traveller aspiration to autonomous working practices, reporting that Gypsies will only resort to wage labour employment when destitute. As a consequence it is not clear how great the impact of low educational skills is on Gypsy Travellers' life chances.

5.3.1.2 Criminal Behaviour

Home Office statistics, such as they exist on Gypsy Travellers involved in criminal activity, are very hard to unravel. Much prosecution of individuals or groups from the Gypsy Traveller community relates to unauthorised encampments and harassment between Gypsy Traveller communities and the static host communities. These sort of crimes are intrinsic to the Gypsy Traveller way of life and condition. Unravelling who is the victim and who the perpetrator is not easy. The plethora of evidence to suggest that Gypsy Travellers are, or at least see themselves as, disproportionately targeted by the police further muddies the picture available on Gypsy Travellers and crime (Taggart, 2003 and Friends, Families And Travellers, 2004). Weber (1998) states that it is likely that crime is committed at a similar level to other groups in similar socio-economic circumstances as there is no empirical evidence suggesting otherwise.

5.3.1.3 Substance Abuse/Dependency

Data on substance abuse and dependency is not currently available in any reliable form. Information put out by the Gypsy Traveller community themselves stresses the strong moral code of Gypsy Travellers and their abhorrence of substance abuse (Okely, 1983) while Weber (1998) suggests that it is an emerging issue of concern among agencies working with young Gypsy Traveller communities. Evidence such as there is suggests that illegal substance abuse is related to the break down in Gypsy Traveller communities more than to communities that have retained their integrity. Tobacco use is high in Gypsy Traveller communities and there is some suggestion of mis-use of prescription drugs among adult Gypsy Travellers (Okely, 1983).

5.3.1.4 Teenage Pregnancy

Once again Gypsy Traveller culture is extremely pertinent to a consideration of this issue. Traditionally there has been a gender disparity in Gypsy Traveller attitudes to sexual behaviour. Virginity before marriage for girls is seen as extremely important although of lesser significance for boys. It is one of the main reasons given for Gypsy Traveller reluctance to send their girls to school after puberty. Girls do tend to marry early by majority community standards and to have large families so teenage pregnancy is common (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2004).

5.3.1.5 Prostitution And Other Sexual Exploitation

No reliable statistics are available for abuse through prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation for Gypsy Travellers. Once again in such a close knit and private community, with an extremely strict sexual moral code, obtaining such information is not easy. Research data that does exist tends to focus on the problem in the wider Gypsy Traveller community, with the trafficking of Roma from central and eastern European countries into the United Kingdom, rather than on the situation for British Gypsy Travellers.

5.3.1.6 Homelessness

Perhaps surprisingly, for a semi-nomadic community, homelessness is a very real problem for Gypsy Travellers. Around 50 per cent of Gypsy Travellers own homes that they use either instead of or as well as travelling. The Criminal Justice And Public Order Act (Home Office, 1994) has heightened the sense of confrontation between the authorities (police, local councils and land owners) and itinerant communities and increased enforced mobility due to difficulties with stopping off places. The concomitant effect on Gypsy Traveller communities has been to increase their social exclusion and the difficulties they face in accessing any sedentary support services.

5.3.1.7 Self-Harm And Suicide

No data is available on this issue. As with several of the issues above, although Gypsy Travellers were recognised as a distinct ethnic group under the Race Relations Act (Home Office, 1976) most agencies have no ethnic monitoring of the use of their services by Gypsy Travellers.

5.3.1.8 Health Problems Associated With Poverty, Disadvantage And Self-Neglect

The International Minority Rights Group (1995) cited in the Friends, Families and Travellers (2004) summarizes the following points in relation to Gypsy Traveller health:

- Life expectancy is poor, significantly less than the dominant culture.
- The birth rate is high and perinatal mortality, still birth mortality and infant mortality significantly higher than the national average. Gypsy Traveller children are between one-and-a-half and two times more likely to die in the first year of life than children in the settled community.
- There are numerous chronic illnesses in the Gypsy Traveller community; respiratory diseases, rheumatism, digestive illnesses etc.
- Unbalanced nutrition leads to deficiencies. Smoking is more common than in the settled community. Drugs are just starting to come on the scene.
- Gypsy Travellers have little if any dental care available to them.

5.4 From Vulnerability To Research Variables

The definition of vulnerability used for this research directly informed the choice of variables used in the practical investigation. The challenge was to find research variables that were:

1. Reliable and robust when used to identify the vulnerability of the research population.
2. Sensitive to early identification. The intention was to identify vulnerability before its more obvious and intractable manifestations in disaffection or disruption.
3. Easily and reliably measurable both as part of this study but also for future school staff.
4. Capable of informing practical interventions that could be put into schools to address the difficulties revealed.

Chapter 1.1 sets out the prime intention of this work to be a piece of educational research. As such the focus of the variables used to identify the subjects' vulnerability had to be amenable to assessment and intervention in an educational setting.

Early identification of children and young people who are likely to become disaffected, alienated or to present with destructive or dysfunctional behaviours, as outlined in Chapter 2.3.3, is essential (Daniels et al, 1998). Once a child has crossed that threshold between sub-clinical behaviours

such as a tendency to be boisterous, rowdy, withdrawn, moody or reluctant to work and starts to disengage from education and mainstream society the way back is almost impossible. This difficulty is evidenced by the low success rates of numerous school and government initiatives designed to support the most seriously troubled young people and to re-engage them with mainstream education and society (Audit Commission, 1996; Daniels et al, 1998; Devlin, 1996).

Several aspects of adolescent development are associated with vulnerability in adolescence and so could have been used as the variables to be measured in this study. Potential indicators of vulnerability, considered for use as research variables included, but were not confined to:

- Language Development,
- Friendship,
- Educational Attainments,
- Self-esteem,
- Locus of control and
- Coping Strategies

Chapters 5.4.1 to 5.4.6 outline each the above potential variables, comparing them against the four criteria for research variables as set out above. The first three potential variables were eventually rejected, for reasons set out below. The last three, self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies, were used as measures of the subjects' potential social and emotional vulnerability.

Having regard to the definition of vulnerability used in this research four variables were used in all. One of these, social disadvantage, has already been discussed in Chapter 5.2. This variable was not measured and compared between individual members of the research population, but was taken as a background factor common to the research population as a whole. The United Kingdom Index Of Local Deprivation (Department of The Environment, 2000) had already established that the catchment area of the school experienced a level of deprivation that placed it in the lowest ten per cent of the United Kingdom as a whole.

The three remaining chosen variables were measured against data standardised on the general population rather than the particularly deprived population of the research sample.

5.4.1 Language Development As A Potential Research Variable

The role of language in the development of an individual's concept of self and adult identity is discussed in Chapter 3.2. This chapter is concerned with the relationship between language and social and emotional vulnerability.

Language development is inextricably bound up with an individual's general development (Bagnato, Kontos and Neisworth, 1987). Language is the means by which we explore and make sense of the world as well as the tool we use to make our mark on the social world. The more limited an individual's mastery of language the more limited their experience and understanding of the world will be; in the philosopher Wittgenstein's words, 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world' (Wittgenstein, 1922). Adequate language skills are a pre-requisite of success in a wide range of personal, educational and social achievements. Difficulties with language development will impact upon an individual's:

- Social understanding
- Social interactions and relationships
- Internal management of feelings and emotions
- Overt behaviours
- Educational progress and particularly literacy skills.

(Afasic, 2004; Hall, 2003).

Language development is usually considered in relation to three inter-linked skills; receptive, expressive and pragmatic language skills. Receptive language refers to an individual's understanding of language. Expressive language is the language an individual has at their command to use. Pragmatic language refers to an individual's understanding of and ability to manipulate language according to the day-to-day conventions of the language environment they operate in; turn taking, eye contact, speaker-listener relationships, figures of speech etc. Difficulties with pragmatic language are often symptomatic of other cognitive development difficulties.

By and large an individual's receptive language is more advanced than their expressive skills; that is, most of us understand more in any language we have a mastery of than we are able or prepared to use (Bagnato et al, 1987; Dunn et al, 1998). Expressive language limitations might be more obvious to teaching staff than receptive difficulties are. Expressive difficulties might be perceived as lack of cognitive ability, behavioural difficulties or shyness. Despite this it is probably more useful to know of the difficulties a child might be experiencing with the less obvious receptive language skills as these underpin expressive language skills in most cases.

Language difficulties can be broadly divided into language development disorders and language development delays. 'Disorders' is the term used when the subject's language development does not follow the normal pattern of language development, failing to pick up fundamentals of the language

they are learning. Language 'delay' is when the subject's language develops along normal lines, following pre-established age-defined norms, but at a slower rate than that of their peers. Language delays are much more common than disorders.

Language is an interactive skill that develops through practice. When a subject fails to develop along normal lines and at a normal rate, either through delay or disorder, it is frequently the result of a complex interplay of several causal factors compounding one another (National Health Service, 1998). These causal factors can include:

- Limited or poor language models
- Coming late to the English language
- Early or intermittent hearing impairments such as glue ear
- On-going hearing impairments
- Global developmental delays
- A whole range of genetic factors
- Medical explanations such as children with autistic spectrum disorders

It is not easy to define language difficulties as a *cause* of social and emotional vulnerability, much less to identify the direction of any causal link between such vulnerability and language delay. There are, however, extremely strong indications of a co-relationship. Gregory, Benner, Nelson and Epstein (2002) conclude that approximately 71 per cent of children identified with emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced significant language deficits and approximately 57 per cent of children with diagnosed

language deficits were also identified with emotional and behavioural disorders. The results from longitudinal studies suggest that the rate of comorbidity between language deficits identified in childhood and emotional and behavioural difficulties, including unemployment and crime, tends to be either stable or to increase over time (Lahey et al, 2003) although no causal link is established.

A range of tools exists for assessing a subject's language skills. Assessments which provide standardised statistical data such as the British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Second Edition (BPVS II) developed by Dunn, Dunn, Whetton and Burley (1998), the Wechsler Objective Language Dimensions (WOLD) developed by Wechsler (1996) or the Comprehensive Assessment Of Spoken Language (CASL) developed by Carrow-Woolfolk (2003) are administered individually as one-to-one assessments. They take between 20 to 45 minutes per subject to administer, longer if the CASL extension batteries are used. The assessor needs to meet certain qualification criteria set by the publishers, usually through membership of Speech and Language Therapy or psychological organisations.

The above named language assessment tools all claim to be sufficiently sensitive to language delays and disorders to allow for identification of fairly low level or subtle difficulties should this be required.

Individuals identified with disordered language are likely to require interventions at a level greater than that normally available from school

resources to meet their needs. Individuals with delayed language can usually be supported very successfully through language enrichment programmes at school level such as the National Literacy Trust's Talking Rights: Taking Responsibility (2003) which is targeted at developing the spoken language skills of Key Stage 3 and 4 students. In both cases (disorder or delay), regardless of interventions designed to ameliorate the difficulties, school life can be greatly facilitated for students with language difficulties when school staff are aware of the existence of these difficulties.

5.4.1.1 The Rejection Of Language Development As a Potential Research Variable

Arguments linking delayed or faulty language development with social and emotional vulnerability suggest that language development would have been an extremely useful variable to include in this research. Four criteria were set out in Chapter 5.4 for choosing the variables to be used in this study. An assessment of language development would have met the criteria of providing useful information about the nature of the subjects' vulnerability at an early stage and also that of informing possible interventions. However, the critical criterion of being easily administered by school staff was not met. The mass screening of the spoken language skills of roughly 300 Year 7 students was not thought to be practical within the design of this research. It would have required more specialist staff time than could be allowed. As a consequence spoken language abilities were not chosen as one of the variables to be used in this research.

5.4.2 Friendships As A Potential Research Variable

The development of children's social relationships, including friendships, their importance to the social adjustment of the child, and dysfunctional developments in social relationships are discussed in Chapter 4. The present chapter is concerned with children's friendships as an indication of social and emotional vulnerability, and an assessment of the suitability of friendship skills as a research variable.

The necessity of a period of turbulence in personal relationships, as a pre-requisite to the acquisition of mature social skills was explored in Chapters 2.2.2.2 and 3.1.4. Thus, to a certain extent, petty squabbles and realignments of friendships through the years of adolescence are a healthy phenomenon and not *necessarily* to be regarded as an indication of more fundamental difficulties in a child's life. As with all other social phenomena there will be a broad range of 'normal' and some young people will experience what are to them quite distressing problems with friendships while still staying within normal limits. However, as Erwin (1993) established, childhood relationships have a direct relevance for later psychological health and social adjustment. They have implications for a variety of problems including an individual's capacity for intimacy and sustained positive relationships in adulthood, school achievement and drop-out, anti-social behaviour and delinquency, law breaking, psychological disorders including alcoholism, suicide and psychosis.

This would seem to make children's friendships an ideal variable with which to explore vulnerability. It would seem from the above arguments that there exists clear evidence of the link between patterns of friendship through childhood and later social and emotional vulnerability (Erwin, 1993), although Erwin does sound a note of caution. Many of the research studies that identified such a link were not clear in proving causation. It is quite probable that, rather than friendship difficulties in childhood leading to this host of undesirable outcomes, the child was subject to some other disorder such as low self-esteem, limited social skills, speech and communication difficulties or some aspect of autistic spectrum disorder which affected both the way in which they related to other people in childhood and later made them susceptible to other problems. If this is the case, friendship difficulties could be seen as a secondary rather than a primary symptom of vulnerability.

Despite this caution such an extensive list of deleterious consequences suggests that it would be appropriate to view persistent friendship difficulties in any child as a potential indication of more serious emotional or behavioural problems. It is therefore reasonable to consider the measurement of friendship patterns as a variable to indicate social and emotional vulnerability on the grounds of comorbidity if not of causal link.

A range of sociometric tools exist for the assessment of friendship and social relationship patterns. Most of these can be administered by competent school staff. Questionnaires such as the Friendship Activity Questionnaire (Bukowski, Hoza and Boivin, 1997) or classic sociograms (Sherman, 2000)

give an interesting and useful picture of friendship dynamics. The information gathered from such assessments can inform interventions targeted at the appropriate subjects, groups of subjects and areas of need. Subtle difficulties can be picked up and acted upon at an early stage in the difficulty.

5.4.2.1 The Rejection Of Friendship As A Potential Research Variable

Despite the clearly established link between friendship styles and social and emotional vulnerability and the availability of measurement tools that could be used and turned into well targeted support programmes, friendship styles were not chosen as a research variable for this work. This decision was made because the larger the number of subjects the more time-consuming, unwieldy and complicated the scoring becomes. It was considered unrealistic to conduct meaningful assessments of social relationships among roughly 300 students. Further, it was believed that some of the issues that would have been revealed through sociograms or friendship questionnaires would be picked up in the social self-esteem and coping strategy assessments that were conducted.

The impact on an individual's social, emotional or behavioural wellbeing of falling into any of the categories identified as dysfunctional in Chapter 4.2 should be borne in mind when considering the reported social relationships and attitudes towards social relationships of the pupils who form the case studies in Part 2 of this research. Not withstanding the decision not to use friendship skills as a research variable, the identification of any children within the research population as presenting any of the dysfunctional behaviours in their social relationships would provide a useful indication of productive interventions. Were the mass screening for social and emotional vulnerability to be moved to Year 6 in the subjects' educational career, that is the final year of primary education as opposed to the first year of secondary

education, it might be appropriate to reconsider the use of friendships as a potential research variable. Although the time taken to conduct such research would remain quite significant the logistics of conducting sociograms in primary schools would be completely different to those pertaining in secondary schools. Pupils in Year 6 would have a pool of somewhere between 25 and 60 peers from whom to chose their friends and make their horizontal social interactions with. They would be organised in class groups with a class teacher who would know them well and be in a position to implement strategies on the basis of any findings.

5.4.3 Educational Attainments As A Potential Research Variable

This research was undertaken by an Educational Psychologist, took place in a school and was designed to support school students and staff. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the planning stages of this research educational attainments were considered as a potential indicator of social and emotional vulnerability.

Educational attainments, had they been chosen as research variables, would almost certainly have been represented by the students' attainments in literacy and numeracy, these two aspects of a student's learning being the ones most commonly used by educationalists to assess general educational achievement. It is extremely common for schools to assign students to sets or streams for all subjects on the basis of their literacy and numeracy, sometimes on their literacy alone. Local Education Authorities frequently link resourcing for additional needs to literacy attainments and government headline pronouncements of the educational achievements of schools, or targets for schools to meet, are often couched in terms of the literacy and numeracy attainments of those schools' students. Science, technology, history, music, languages, creative arts or all the other subjects or aspects of a child's development that could be considered take a very secondary place. There is also a strong public perception of the primacy of literacy and numeracy, as represented in expressions such as, 'the three 'R's' for reading, writing and arithmetic. Basic skill courses in colleges, prisons, the army and other establishments offering educational courses for individuals

requiring basic, remedial or highly differentiated educational programmes are usually predominantly made up of literacy and numeracy lessons. Employers frequently ask potential employees for 5 level A to C GCSEs, two of which must be English and Maths. Examples of the use of literacy and numeracy as an indicator of basic educational attainment appear to be legion.

The use of literacy and numeracy levels as shorthand for educational attainment is, in reality, often even narrower than it seems. In many of the examples cited above 'literacy' is measured purely in terms of the subject's reading decoding skills. For example the LEA in which this study was conducted sets the criteria for statements of special educational need to support specific learning difficulties according to the discrepancy between cognitive ability and basic reading attainments. The assessment tools recognised by the LEA for assessing basic reading look at the decoding of isolated words out of context with no reference to the student's understanding of the function of the written word, appreciation or comprehension of text. In the professional experience of the researcher numerous secondary schools report on students' literacy levels on the basis of what are predominantly reading decoding tests.

On the basis of the above arguments some basic measure of the subjects' literacy and numeracy skills would be sufficient to use as a measure of educational attainment. Such measures should be easily obtainable through the results of the students' Year 6 SATs.

An enormous body of research exists to link a student's educational attainments with a wide range of social and emotional vulnerabilities. Nicaise et al, (1999) reviewed the research carried out with the financial support of the European Commission in the context of their Socrates Programme (questions of common interest in education policy). This extensive report highlighted the way educational interest in Europe over the past 20 years had been focussed on efficiency and output, narrowing educational provision to a focus on preparation for the labour market and improved national competitiveness (see Chapter 1.4, The Purpose Of Schooling).

More recently, Nicaise et al argued, the results of transnational research had swung the educational focus back to the issue of 'democratisation', as characterised by an educational programme steered by the needs of the whole population rather than by the needs of their governments for an effective workforce. Such research highlighted the potentially divisive nature of educational provision in Europe, drawing attention to the relationship between educational attainment and social and emotional disadvantage. Nicaise et al's thesis was that 'while the general level of education has increased [across Europe] it has been demonstrated that in most countries inequality in education is passed on unrelentingly from generation to generation' (Nicaise et al, 1999, section 1).

Recognition of the cross-generational nature of inequality has gone hand-in-hand with European governments' attention to social exclusion. Nicaise et

al's report claims Europe's poorest children often fail with large numbers of them ending up in special education or in 'second rate streams of secondary education'. Additionally, across Europe, children identified as socially excluded and living in poverty can be seen to score extremely poorly in terms of literacy and numeracy when assessed half way through their school careers. They leave school either before the end of compulsory education or without qualifications, with a damaged self-image and disillusioned about what society has to offer them (Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). The vicious circle of exclusion is thus perpetuated as uneducated young people become the first victims of unemployment and poverty, more frequently have to deal with illness and are more likely to become delinquent (Nicaise et al, 1999).

Nicaise et al's report concluded with a strongly worded plea for further research in this area, investigating causal links, direction of affect and efficiency of interventions.

The research that Nicaise et al was reviewing clearly linked social and emotional vulnerability, in the terms used for this research, with low educational (explicitly literacy and numeracy) attainments. This would seem to strengthen the argument for using educational attainments as a good variable to choose when attempting to identify socially and emotionally vulnerable students.

5.4.3.1 The Rejection Of Educational Attainments As Potential Research Variables

Using the above evidence educational attainments might, at first glance, appear to be ideal research variables for this study.

- There is abundant evidence to suggest that students who achieve low scores in assessments of educational attainment are likely to be vulnerable to the range of social and emotional difficulties under consideration in this research.
- Literacy and numeracy assessments have been carried out on the students, in the form of SATs, within a year of the research period and the results should be easily available.
- Accurate identification of students with low educational attainments should directly inform relatively easily implemented and well-targeted interventions in a school setting.

Despite these obvious advantages educational attainments were eliminated as potential research variables at a very early stage in the planning of this work.

Schools are primarily educational establishments and by their very nature should already have in place systems to identify students with difficulties in educational attainments and strategies in place to support such students through their normal curriculum differentiation. Whilst such procedures and strategies are not foolproof, and many students will be inadequately

identified or supported, it was not the intention of this work to review or supplement these existing systems.

Many socially and emotionally vulnerable students will have educational difficulties. Causal links between such vulnerability and such difficulties are not easy to establish and rather than the relationship being uni-directional it is likely that the two characteristics exacerbate one another in a complex relationship of co-existence and co-dependence. Nicaise et al (1999) showed the link between social and emotional disadvantage and educational attainment but was very clear that simply targeting money or resources on education and school-based strategies in areas of high deprivation would not address the problems. A much more fundamental approach to social policy, way beyond the scope of this research or the interventions that could be recommended here, would be needed.

It is possible to see educational difficulties as a likely outcome of an individual's problems with self-esteem, belief in their personal efficacy or their coping strategies, or alternatively as problems with self-esteem or belief in personal efficacy as a likely outcome of educational difficulties. This being the case educational difficulties could be seen as being subsumed under the identification and addressing of the variables that were chosen and the conclusions and recommendations of this work have indeed treated them as such.

While the results of the students' Year 6 SATs in numeracy and literacy should be readily available and should have the advantage of yielding nationally standardised information, such data was rejected in the planning stage as unlikely to include a wide enough percentage of the research sample. The Information Management section of the Local Education Authority in which this research was conducted hold information to suggest that across the Authority as a whole, on average, 13.3 percent of Year 6 students do not take SATs. In any one class of 30 students this is likely to be made up of:

- 1 absentee, often kept at home by parents during the tests.
- Between 0 and 1 students who would be disapplied from SATs due to their inability to access them.
- Between 2 and 3 students who would not take the SATs because they were working below the level of the tests.

The pyramid of schools that make up the research population of this work was said to have consistently higher numbers of students not taking SATs than the Authority average, in some years over 15 percent. Thus it was reasonable to assume that educational attainment data would not be available on over 13.3 percent of the research population and that this was likely to be skewed to include a high percentage of the most vulnerable students. Indeed, the students with the very lowest predicted educational attainments would have been deliberately excluded by the SATs system.

When the data gathering part of this research did take place a much higher number of students than was anticipated was unavailable (13.1 percent, see Chapter 9.1) but even with this level of unavailable data there was a higher level of inclusion than would have been the case with educational attainments.

5.4.4 Self-Esteem As A Potential Research Variable

Self-esteem refers to the perception an individual has of his or her own worth. It represents a composite of an individual's feelings, hopes, fears, thoughts and views on who they are, what they are, what they have been and what they might become. It is acknowledged to be a fundamental need at all stages of human development (Battle, 1992) in that it affects an individual's level of achievement, ability to adjust to environmental demands and general state of well-being. It is argued that at birth the infant has little concept of itself as an individual distinct in its own right from others and the environment. As a young person lives through childhood this rather vague, poorly integrated and somewhat fragmented phenomenon becomes increasingly coherent and differentiated (see Chapter 3). This process is given shape through a combination of inherent genetic make-up and life experiences.

Concepts similar to what is currently termed 'self-esteem' have been identified and discussed by philosophers and other thinkers for many centuries. Damon (1983) traced the quantitative approaches to self-esteem back to William James's 1892 analyses of the 'self-concept', described as the 'sum total of all the person can call his'. This encompassed both cognitive constituents and the affective aspect of self-esteem, which was quantified by way of the equation:

$$\text{Self-esteem} = \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Pretensions}}$$

Maslow (1954) identified esteem needs within the hierarchy of needs as incorporating self-esteem and esteem from others, this distinction confirming the importance of external referencing in establishing an overall measure. Harter (1987 & 1990), found that the external reference points vary from child to child, depending on those attributes that the individual child values. Thus, if a child's self-esteem represents the degree of perceived discrepancy between what they would like to be (or believe they ought to be) and what they think they are, the measures might be applied to academic skill by one child, sporting ability by another, and 'being good' by a third.

Numerous researchers have attempted to relate self-esteem to a wide range of other human factors. It has been loosely related to measured intelligence by a number of researchers but the correlation is of only a low significance. Coopersmith (1967) found a correlation of .28 between intelligence and subjective self-esteem in a group of preadolescent males. Along with other researchers Coopersmith concluded that the correlation, although significant ($p \leq .05$), did not indicate a strong relationship between self-esteem and intelligence. The concept is more complex than that. Whilst the relationship between self-esteem and intelligence might not be particularly strong the

relationship between self-esteem and what a person is able to do with that intelligence, how they operate, is quite a different matter.

Psychologists have long seen self-esteem as *the* critical measure of mental health and as linking directly to many factors pertinent to disaffection such as maladjustment, school performance, confidence, social relations and mental health generally throughout life (Jahoda, 1958; Wylie, 1961).

Erwin (1993), as discussed in Chapters 4.2, 4.2.2 and 5.4.2, suggested that adolescents who experience difficulties with friendships might well be experiencing these as secondary symptoms to self-esteem problems and that identification of, and support with, self-esteem problems might well be the most productive approach for such young people.

Adult depression and self-esteem has a long history of being linked by researchers (Coopersmith, 1967; Beck and Beamesderfer, 1974) but attempts to make this link in adolescents are much more recent. Battle's (1978) study and the ongoing research that culminated in the Self-Esteem Inventories used in this study was among the earlier research. That research found a highly significant inverse correlation between self-esteem and depression in adolescents. Using a multi-component model of self-esteem (as described in Chapters 5.4.4.1 and 5.4.4.2) Battle found that personal self-esteem is more closely linked with depression in adolescents than social self-esteem is. In personal self-esteem and depression the negative correlation was high (-.73) while in social self-esteem and

depression the correlation was only moderate (-.42). This suggests that depression is a distressful mood characterised by diminished feelings of personal worth.

Other human factors which have been shown to have a significant correlation with self-esteem include learning difficulties and learning success, anxiety, ADHD and employment status. In all of these factors a causal link or direction of cause has not been established but young people with low self-esteem are found to fare worse in these areas than those with a higher self-esteem.

Research such as the above, linking self-esteem with a whole range of factors relating to social and emotional vulnerability, suggests that self-esteem would fulfil the first and second criteria for a research variable as set out in Chapter 5.4.

Earlier research into self-esteem, not least Coopersmith (1967), highlighted both strong familial elements in self-esteem and the relative stable nature of self-esteem throughout life. Evidence suggesting that self-esteem levels are fixed in individuals would seem to militate against the use of self-esteem as a research variable as the fourth criteria required the variable to lead to intervention programmes for the subjects.

However, more recent research suggests a more complex situation and one more amenable to ameliorative support. Battle (1992) found that, once

established, perceptions of self-esteem did tend to be fairly stable and resistant to change, but that prior to this establishment there was a period of fluctuating self-esteem. Kernis et al. (1993) found variances in the factors affecting the stability of self-esteem between those with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals tended to screen out negative feedback while reacting positively to positive feedback. Low self-esteem individuals, however, tended not to maintain higher levels of stability when faced with positive feedback, but did react to negative feedback. In both instances these reactions would appear to have the effect of reinforcing already established perceptions of self-esteem, if anything pushing individuals towards the poles of self-esteem.

Alsaker and Olweus (1992) found that the self-esteem of adolescents is relatively stable in the short term, but rather less so over periods of several years. Indeed, self-esteem was seen as particularly unstable in the years of early adolescence, as the young person found and set appropriate standards for themselves, and as parental and school expectations themselves stabilised. This volatility of self-esteem underpins the appropriateness of support efforts and interventions in these early years where low levels of self-esteem are identified.

Dweck (2000) proposes an extremely interesting, and more importantly useful, model of self-esteem, particularly in relation to academic achievement. This model sees self-esteem during adolescence as potentially relatively malleable within certain limits, subjects being seen more

as operating within a potential range of self-esteem rather than as having a set point.

Dweck based her alternative model for intellectual or academic self-esteem upon the theories the subjects held about their own abilities and their capacity to increase those abilities. Dweck's model differentiated between those individuals she described as entity theorists and those she described as incremental theorists. An entity theorist believes that they have a fixed amount of intelligence to use; a fixed position on an intelligence scale. Such pupils will put a great deal of effort into seeking out tasks that allow them to display their abilities and hide their deficiencies. They are likely to avoid all academic challenges, both as part of their quest to appear able to others and also in an effort to protect their own academic self-esteem. They will seek out easy, low-effort, successes that will make them feel good about themselves, boost their self-esteem and demonstrate their ability to achieve. Such pupils require a diet of easy successes.

Incremental theorists on the other hand believe that intelligence is a commodity that can be cultivated and trained, and thus expanded. Such students are likely to feel empowered to take risks and to seek out challenges in the quest to fulfil and extend their potential.

Dweck argued that self-esteem based on an entity theory approach would be high when an individual felt they were performing tasks quickly, easily, error-free and better than others. The traditional small-step educational

programme that starts well within the pupil's ability to succeed and offers frequent opportunities for success and praise is likely to appeal to them. Whether or not this is the most appropriate approach to support is discussed further in Chapters 10.6 and 11.6.

Numerous tools exist with which to measure self-esteem. Battle's Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventories For Children And Adults, 1992 was the one chosen for this research (see Chapters 5.4.4.1 and 5.4.4.2). This is a well established measuring tool and meets the criteria set out in Chapter 5.4 of being easy to administer and score by school staff. Unlike earlier measures which looked at self-esteem as a fairly homogenous phenomena (Rosenberg, 1979 cited in Damon,1983) Battle's self-esteem measure takes a multi-factorial approach separating out social, academic and parental self-esteem. This allows for more subtle and meaningful analysis of the subjects' responses and more accurately targeted therapeutic interventions either following the recommendations of this thesis or, in future years, adapting the work to incorporate any of the extremely numerous self-esteem targeted programmes available to school staff (e.g. Sher, 1998; Lown, 2002).

On the basis of the above research self-esteem fitted all of the criteria established for a research variable and was the first such variable to be chosen as a measure of the potential social and emotional vulnerability of the research population.

5.4.4.1 Measuring Self-Esteem

As established in Chapter 5.4.4 the concept of self esteem is an extremely old one and has been viewed as a quantifiable commodity for well over a hundred years Damon (1983). The concept of self-esteem is widely used both in current psychology and in popular language, having been related to virtually every other psychological concept or domain at some time (MacArthur and MacArthur, 2004). As a consequence there is an enormous range of approaches and tools that can be used to measure it.

The first criterion considered in choosing an appropriate self-esteem measurement tool for this research, from the plethora of such tools that exist, was the practical consideration of availability and familiarity. As a working psychologist the researcher had access to and was familiar with the administration, scoring and interpretation of several self-esteem scales. As these had proved satisfactory in numerous similar studies there was little reason to consider tools outside this range.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965, 1986) is one of the more popular measures of self-esteem and is generally considered as the standard against which other measures of self-esteem are measured (MacArthur and MacArthur, 2004). This scale was originally developed to measure adolescents' global feelings of self-worth or self-acceptance. It contains ten items that are usually scored as a Likert scale, using a four-point response ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items are face valid

and the scale is short, easy and fast to administer. The scale has shown high reliability. Test-retest correlations are in the range of .82 to .88 (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1993).

Another well established measure of self-esteem that was available to the researcher was the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (1981). In contrast to Rosenberg's unidimensional measure of global self-esteem this was developed through research to assess attitude toward oneself in general, and in specific contexts: peers, parents, school and personal interests. It was originally designed for use with children drawing on items from scales that were previously used by Carl Rogers (Rogers,1961). Respondents state whether a set of 50 generally favourable or unfavourable aspects of a person are 'like me' or 'not like me'. Test-retest reliability coefficients are .80, alternate forms reliability is supported by correlations ranging from .71 to .80. Construct validity is high (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1993).

Although the above two self-esteem scales, or several of the numerous other scales that exist, would have been adequate for the present research as was noted in Chapter5.4.4 Battle's Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventories For Children And Adults, Second Edition (CFSEI-2) was chosen. Key reasons for this choice included:

- the researcher's greater familiarity with this scale
- the extremely useful subscale scores of general, academic, social and parental self-esteem. These were considered highly pertinent to the present research.

5.4.4.2 Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventories For Children And Adults, Second Edition (CFSEI-2)

These devices are self-report scales intended to measure an individual's perception of self; the client's subjective feelings. The CFSEI-2 was originally designed to be used by psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors and teachers as a screening device to identify individuals who may be in need of some form of psychological intervention in the areas of low self-esteem or depression. They are recommended for use as both a research and a clinical tool. They have been revised and updated on several occasions following ongoing research and significant inverse correlations have been found between self-esteem and depression, anxiety and ADHD. Significant positive correlations have been established between self-esteem on the one hand and academic achievement and employment prospects on the other.

Several inventories make up the CFSEI-2. Form B for children is the relevant one to this work. The CFSEI-2 for children was standardised in Canada on both boys and girls in grades three to nine (ages 8 to 15) although Battle claims that they can be used successfully with older children as well. It evolved from a 14 year research programme involving over 60 studies focused upon the individual's perception of his or her own worth.

Test-retest reliability data for the CFSEI - 2 falls within the range of $r = 0.79$ to $r = 0.92$. Information on validity indicates correlations of $r = 0.71$ to $r =$

0.80 with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI - 2; Coopersmith 1967); r = 0.75 with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and r = -0.61 with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI).

The version of the CFSEI - 2 administered in this study takes less than 5 minutes to complete and consists of participants answering 'yes' or 'no' to 30 statements about themselves. These responses are scored to obtain an overall Self-Esteem score that can be converted into a percentile rank within the standardisation group and a T-score. In addition to this total score the subject can be rated on five separate sub-tests and achieve a rating on each of these scales:

A General Self-Esteem Scale

An Academic Self-Esteem Scale

A Social Self-Esteem Scale

A Parental Self-Esteem Scale

A Lie Scale

Thus a subject may present with a fairly high overall Self-Esteem score but sub-test analysis might reveal a significantly low Social Self-Esteem score. Such a profile might well be an indication that the subject is experiencing severe difficulties in peer relations. Alternatively a particularly low Academic Self-Esteem score might throw light on a child's learning difficulties.

The Lie Scale provides a measure of the subject's defensiveness. Individuals who respond defensively to self-esteem items refuse to ascribe to themselves characteristics of a generally valid but socially unacceptable nature such as telling lies or taking things that do not belong to them. A high score on this scale (which is not included in the overall Self-Esteem score) would indicate a defensive personality. Experience has shown that such children, who have difficulty in admitting to perceived failings or in recognising a gap between their actual self and their ideal self, can be among the hardest for a psychologist to work with productively.

Tables 1 to 4 below detail the parameters of the various tests and sub-tests and distributions of standardised responses, these forming the bases for analysis of the results in Chapter 9.

Table 1: Self-Esteem Inventories: Standardised Means And Standard Deviations

Subtest	Mean	SD
Overall	19.17	4.45
General	7.42	2.08
Academic	3.48	1.27
Social	3.46	1.22
Parental	3.58	1.23

Table 2: Self-Esteem Inventories: Classification Of Overall Scores

Score	Classification
24+	Very High
20 – 23	High
14 – 19	Intermediate
11 –13	Low
≤ 10	Very Low

Table 3: Self-Esteem Inventories: Classification Of Subtest Scores

Subtest	Very Low	Low	Intermediate	High	Very High
General	≤ 2	3 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 9	10
Academic	≤ 1	2	3	4	5
Social	≤ 1	2	3	4	5
Parental	≤ 1	2	3	4	5

Table 4: Self-Esteem Inventories: Standardised Distribution Of Scores

Test/Subtest	Very Low	Low	Intermediate	High	Very High
Overall	7%	5%	33%	41%	14%
General	3%	8%	31%	44%	14%
Academic	10%	12%	20%	35%	23%
Social	10%	15%	9%	51%	15%
Parental	9%	9%	20%	38%	24%

5.4.5 Locus Of Control As A Potential Research Variable

A central dimension in the development of childhood self-esteem is the subject's understanding of, and belief in the control that they exert over their lives and the feelings of efficacy or personal agency they experience. This belief in personal control can be divided into

- the sense of having some power or causative effect over one's self and
- the sense of having some power or causative effect over events in the outside world.

The concept of control over one's inner self relates to the ability to control impulses, to delay gratification and to tolerate the normal frustrations of life. It involves the balancing of one's own desires against the rights of others and constructing future life plans that supersede immediate gratification, deferring to certain social conventions and rules, respecting legitimate authority and a wide range of other 'socialised' acts.

The concept of control over external events includes a belief in an ability to make choices about one's life and to control the external environment one lives in.

The concept of 'locus of control' derived originally from Rotter's social learning theory (Rotter, 1966). Locus of control theories place individuals along a continuum according to where they perceive their locus of control to

be sited. At one end are people who believe they have the power to direct their lives and take control of their destiny. This is an internal locus of control. At the other end are people who believe that they are powerless and that all of their life chances and experiences, both in the internal and the external environment, are controlled by people or forces that are more powerful than they are. This is an externalised locus of control. The vast majority of the population can be placed somewhere along this continuum.

The degree of control that humans perceive they can and do exert over their lives has been related to their psychological well-being and behaviour for many years. In 1845 the American author, philosopher and political thinker Henry Thoreau described in some detail how, as he saw it, human psychology, society, behaviour and relationships were all changing beyond recognition, and for the most part deteriorating. This he ascribed to the sudden and enormous increase in population density and movement caused by industrialisation, the gold rush and the coming of the railroad.

Thoreau argued that humans and human communities had developed over millions of years as tight knit, interdependent units where everyone they ever met or interacted with was well known to one another. This engendered in people a sense of stability, security and control over their lives. As a result of the sudden expansion both of the population of North America and also of population mobility people found themselves interacting daily with others who they knew nothing about. Worse still, they often depended on these strangers for their basic needs and survival. This he argued led to a great

feeling of unease and insecurity. Thoreau suggested that the lessening of the perceived control people had over their lives generalised itself into a feeling of disempowerment, mental ill ease, and indeed a devaluing of life itself. In evidence of his theory he cited the increased murder and rape rate in the communities thus affected (Thoreau, 1845).

Thoreau's evolutionary perspective on the role of control in humans' understanding of their lives and actions anticipated later psychological models. Whereas Thoreau saw assuming control of one's life as essential to mental well-being B. F. Skinner, in Beyond Freedom and Dignity (Skinner, 1971), argued for the need for man to 'surrender his myths of personal freedom and self determination' and to accept that he is controlled by forces outside himself. Such an acceptance, he argued, would lead to the ability to exert a degree of control on those forces or at least to minimise their negative effects on him. With such an acceptance 'the chance elements of childhood and social experiences that can come to produce psychotic assassins and deviates of all manner would be eliminated'. In short, Skinner argued that much of life is beyond our control and that to maintain otherwise, to persist in the assumption that we are free agents or makers of our own fates, is what leads to problems.

This Skinnerian view is both at variance to most pre-Skinner models as far as they exist and also to many of the theorists who have come after him. Hayes (1994) refers to findings by Rotter (1966) that the beliefs people have about the extent to which they can control situations affects the amount of

stress they experience. People with an internalised locus of control who believe they are able to influence outcomes themselves by their own actions experience less stress than those with an external locus control. The potentially self-fulfilling nature of this phenomenon is also noted, with greater efforts to influence outcomes being made by those who believe that those efforts will be effective in achieving the outcome desired. Lefcourt (1976) similarly argues for the critical importance of individuals to see themselves as actors with the ability to determine their own fate within limits. Without such a perception he argues, their ability to cope with stress, engage in challenges and most importantly to enjoy life are all seriously impaired. Such behaviour is described as 'learned helplessness' (Peterson et al, 1993).

Chapter 3.1.7 considers the cultural specificity of the value placed on an individual's locus of control. In the light of this it must be stressed that it is not the contention of this research that an external locus of control is an absolute indicator of vulnerability, more that it is a measure of an individual's 'fitness' for the society in which they operate. The implication of the research outlined in Chapter 3.1.7 is that in certain more collective societies individuals will have a higher expectation, both themselves and placed on them by others, of their lives being controlled by external forces such as fate and destiny.

Although this work uses an external locus of control as a measure of vulnerability in an individual it would be highly inappropriate to use those

same measures of locus of control to conclude vulnerability in the more externally, fate focused societies discussed in the earlier chapter. It might or might not be possible to view the whole society as a vulnerable society within a world context. Such a contention is far beyond the remit of this research and no evidence for such a thesis is available to the researcher.

Since the early 1960s western research has continued into the search for a relationship between perceived locus of control and other life factors, particularly achievement. Messer (1972) found support for the simple generality that an internal locus of control is associated with higher grades and achievement test scores even when IQ and cognitive impulsity are controlled. Indeed Messer took this finding further and asserted that boys who assumed responsibility for success and girls who assumed responsibility for failure were the most likely to obtain high grades in school. This sex-linked difference was reflected in the work of Nowicki and Strickland (1973), whose Locus of Control scales are used in this work, although Nowicki and Strickland appear to differ from Messer in the focus of their conclusions. Messer saw internalised loci of control as related to high achievement in both males and females, the difference resting in whether the focus was on one's responsibility for success (males) or for failure (females). Nowicki and Strickland, on the other hand, found that externality was associated with achievement for females while internality was related to like achievement for males. Such work suggests that the meaning of perceived causality may differ for boys and girls (See Chapter 3.1.3).

Dweck's research (2000), which is predominantly related to self-esteem, picks up the concept of empowerment and self-actualisation through a belief in the ability to control and shape one's life. Her entity versus incremental theory (see Chapter 5.4.4) emphasises the importance of nurturing students' belief in their power to shape and develop their own lives. Students with an incrementalist approach to their lives will view their abilities as a commodity that can be cultivated and trained. By believing in their own personal agency (internal locus of control) they are more likely to feel empowered to take risks and to face challenges in the quest to fulfil and extend their potential. In research which assisted subjects who had assumed a helplessness in the face of academic failures to believe in a more internalised locus of control it was shown that by so doing the subjects' performance could be improved.

Dweck maintains that even students with low confidence in their abilities (low academic self-esteem) will thrive on challenge, throwing themselves into difficult tasks if they adopt an incremental theory and perceive these tasks as useful in the furtherance of their understanding and ability.

For an entity theorist, therefore, external referencing appears to be the norm, whereas an incremental theory-based approach would appear to emphasise an internal locus of control, such that an individual's self-esteem can be seen to be the product of one's own efforts, and thus more fully within one's own control.

To be chosen for this research variables had to fulfil a number of criteria (Chapter 5.4). Of the various research tools available for measuring locus of control the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale was chosen as being both reliable and robust as a tool and also simple for school staff to administer and interpret (Chapters 5.4.5.1 and 5.4.5.2).

Dweck and Dweck et al's research (1976, 1978 and 2000) has shown that early identification of a person's belief in their own personal efficacy is both possible and highly desirable. Children with an external locus of control (entity theorists), and who fail in school, can be helped to succeed by encouraging them to believe that their failures are under their control.

On the basis of the above research locus of control fitted all of the criteria established for a research variable. Additionally, the above research suggests that measuring the perceived locus of control could be both an adjunct to the early identification of potentially vulnerable young people and also a tool in the planning for interventions.

5.4.5.1 Measuring Locus Of Control

Two measuring tools for perceived locus of control were available for this research; Rotter's Locus of Control Scales and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus Of Control Scale.

Locus of control beliefs developed out of Rotter's social learning theory and Rotter first devised measuring tools for the concept in 1966 when he produced his original 29 – item locus of control questionnaire, distinguishing between a belief in internal (I) and external (E) loci of control (Rotter's I – E Scales). This questionnaire was developed and adapted by both Rotter himself and also Lefcourt and others (Lefcourt, 1991). Rotter's scales, and developments from them, are still widely in use but increasingly researchers are turning to more specific measures of locus of control such as health locus of control, and/or to multidimensional measures (Wallston and Wallston, 1981). Criticism has fallen on Rotter's design, particularly the use of a forced choice scale and the degree to which subjects really do see the alternatives given as being true opposites (Ray, 1984). Ray claims that the validity of Rotter's scale is in doubt as when respondents are given the opportunity to describe both alternatives as applicable to themselves, many do so.

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus Of Control Scale was developed to extend the measurement of locus of control to children and young people. The version

used in this study was well known to the researcher and judged to be easy to administer, score and interpret.

5.4.5.2 The Nowicki-Strickland Locus Of Control Scale

Once again this is a paper and pencil self-report scale. It consists of 40 yes/no questions. The higher the score an individual achieves the more external their orientation. The readability of the items was targeted at 10 year olds while remaining appropriate for older pupils. Table 5 sets out the standardised means and standard deviations for this scale according to age and gender.

Table 5: Means And Standard Deviations Of Nowicki-Strickland Locus Of Control Scores For Males And Females By Age

Age In Years	Males		Females	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
7	17.97	4.67	17.38	3.06
8	18.44	3.58	18.80	3.63
9	18.32	4.38	17.00	4.03
10	13.73	5.16	13.32	4.58
11	13.15	4.87	13.94	4.23
12	14.73	4.35	12.29	3.58
13	13.81	4.06	12.25	3.75
14	13.05	5.34	12.98	5.31
15	12.48	4.81	12.01	5.15
16	11.38	4.74	12.37	5.05

Thus means for this test range from 18.80 (SD =3.63) for 8 year old females to 11.38 (SD = 4.74) for 16 year old males.

This measuring tool was devised by Nowicki and Strickland in response to the need they saw for an easily administered and reliable instrument to study the effects of a generalised locus of control orientation of a child's behaviour. Nowicki and Strickland felt that prior to their scale all other scales were flawed in some way; low reliability, structured for academic rather than general use, unwieldy to administer and score, difficult and dull for young children etc. They hypothesised that it was essential that any measure of locus of control should incorporate the following relationships:

- Scores become more internalised with the increasing age of the subjects
- Scores will be related to achievement with 'internals' achieving more than 'externals'.
- Scores will not be significantly related to measures of social desirability or intelligence.

The measuring tool they eventually devised had estimates of internal consistency, corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, of r = .63 for ages 7, 8 and 9; r = .68 for ages 10, 11 and 12; r = .74 for ages 13, 14 and 15 and r = .81 for 16 year olds. As the test is additive and the items are not comparable the split-half reliabilities tend to underestimate the true internal consistency of the scale.

Test-retest reliability samples in three age bands, 6 weeks apart, were .63 for 7 year olds, .66 for 11 year olds and .71 for 14 year olds.

5.4.6 Coping Strategies As A Potential Research Variable

The rationale behind the measurement of coping strategies in adolescents rests on the demands that their stage of life places upon them. As established in Chapter 2.2.2.2 of this work adolescence is a period when young people are confronted by a series of developmental hurdles and challenges. Some of these are normative tasks such as the development of identity and achieving independence from the family; tasks which must be balanced against staying connected and fitting into a peer group. Additionally there are physiological changes and cognitive developments that mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. The requirements of changing social roles with peers and members of the opposite sex, of schooling and of looming career decisions all make demands on the adolescent. Each of these demands requires cognitive and behavioural strategies for effective transition and adaptation into adulthood. The young person with adaptive strategies will make this transition more effectively than the young person without.

Two general coping strategies have been distinguished: problem solving strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-solving strategies are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances. Emotion-focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events (MacArthur and MacArthur, 2004). Research indicates that people use both

types of strategies to combat most stressful events. The predominance of one type of strategy over another is determined, in part, by personal style and in part by the type of stressful event. Examples of this might include people employing problem-focused coping to deal with potentially controllable problems such as those relating to work or family whereas stressors perceived as less controllable such as certain kinds of physical health problem, might prompt more emotion-focused coping (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980).

In addition to the distinction made between problem-solving and emotion-focused coping strategies the literature often distinguishes between active and avoidant coping strategies. Active coping strategies are either behavioural or physiological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself, or how one thinks about it, whereas avoidant coping strategies lead people into activities or mental states that keep them from directly addressing stressful events. Such strategies would include alcohol or other substance use or mental withdrawal. Generally speaking, active coping strategies, whether behavioural or emotional, are thought to be better ways to deal with stressful events and avoidant coping strategies appear to be a psychological risk factor or marker for adverse responses to stressful life events (Holahan and Moos, 1987).

Isakson and Jarvis (1999) conducted a longitudinal study into the adjustment of adolescents during the transition into High School. The focus of their study very much reflected that of the present research. Whereas this

research attempts to identify the individual adolescents around the time of transition who might be most at risk of later difficulties, Isakson and Jarvis attempted to identify the pertinent factors to a successful transition for those adolescents. In both cases recommendations to be implemented at school level were made. Isakson and Jarvis assessed a range of factors, including:

- The students' sense of autonomy (linked to locus of control)
- The students' social support
- The students' sense of school membership
- The students' educational attainments
- The students' school attendance
- Perceived stressors for both the students and their families
- Coping strategies available to the students and to their carers.

Although some significance was found for all of the factors assessed the most significant and useful in terms of recommended interventions were sense of school membership, sense of autonomy and the range of coping strategies available to the subjects and also to their carers. While social support was a significant factor the complexity of ameliorative action in this area at school level was acknowledged.

All adolescents face challenges and most cope at least satisfactorily with them. Concern arises when there is a mismatch between the demands placed upon a person and the resources at their disposal. Such a mismatch could stem from either inadequate resources or inordinate demands. In extreme circumstances the tension which arises from such a mismatch can lead to severe depression or suicide. Suicide can be considered to be the

ultimate in maladaptive coping strategies, allowing as it does no room for further choice. Young people who choose death as a solution to their problems could be said to have been let down by their inadequate coping strategies at a time when they are extremely vulnerable to increasing pressures and uncertainties.

Studies of adolescents who take their own lives (Samaritans, 2000) indicate that a key factor in the decisions that young people take at this time is the range of strategies they feel they have at their disposal to deal with their feelings and difficulties. 'Having at their disposal' involves both the existence of possibilities such as people to talk to or places to go but also, and crucially, the understanding that these strategies are available to them and realistic ones to take.

A further reason to turn psychological attention to the coping strategies employed by adolescents is the possibility that those strategies that they have become accustomed to in adolescence might remain their most favoured strategies for much of the rest of their lives. Adolescents who have come to depend on sulking, bullying, non-productive worrying, wishing for a favourable outcome, turning to a dysfunctional displacement activity such as alcohol or drugs or refusing to consider their problems could continue to employ such strategies when faced with problems in adulthood. Such an outcome will have clear implications for society as a whole as well as for the individual.

Much of the research looked at so far in this Chapter including that of Dweck (2000), Isakson and Jarvis (1999) and the Samaritans (2000) see self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies as complementary psychological factors. Similarly, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (2000) list four within-child factors which relate to mental health outcomes. These are:

- Self-esteem
- Sociability
- Autonomy
- Coping skills or strategies

Healthy levels of self-esteem are conducive to feelings of greater autonomy and control in one's life while a belief in the ability to control outcomes in life through one's own efforts is crucial to the confident selection of productive coping strategies. Proficiency in or productive levels of these three variables has been shown to be key to explaining why some people appear more capable than others of coping with the stresses and challenges of life. It is not surprising that so many researchers have used a combination of these three in their work as they appear to offer a reliable early indicator of potential difficulties and to point to useful strategies for practical ameliorative action at school level.

In order to meet the criteria for research variables set out in Chapter 5.4, once the research had indicated pertinent factors to assess as early indicators of adolescent vulnerability consideration had to be given to practical issues such as finding assessment tools that could be used easily

by school staff and that would inform useful recommendations. Frydenberg and Lewis' Adolescent Coping Scales (Frydenberg and Lewis, 1993) are designed to be both an assessment tool and an intervention, or an integral part of the intervention. They are quick and easy to administer and interpret by school staff.

On the basis of the above research coping strategies fitted all of the criteria established for a research variable and was chosen as an appropriate complement to self-esteem and locus of control as a measure of the potential social and emotional vulnerability of the research population.

5.4.6.1 Measuring Adolescent Coping Skills

As with the measurement of self-esteem and locus of control, pragmatic considerations dictated the range of coping strategy measurement tools considered for this research. No wider search was conducted than the four measuring tools readily available to the researcher:

- The Ways Of Coping Measure, Folkman and Lazarus (1980)
- COPE, Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989)
- Kidscope, Spirito, Stark and Williams (1988)
- Adolescent Coping Scales, Frydenberg and Lewis (1993)

The Ways Of Coping Measure (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980) is an empirically derived inventory of specific ways in which people might cope with a stressful event. Individuals are asked to respond to a specific stressor and indicate the degree to which they have utilised each particular coping method to deal with it. Responses to the statements are then factor-analysed to identify more general patterns of coping. Eight distinct coping strategies have been identified:

- Confrontational coping
- Seeking social support
- Planful problem solving
- Self-control
- Distancing
- Positive appraisal
- Accepting responsibility

- Escape/avoidance

This scale gives scope for different researchers to add items that reflect the particular needs of their research and this, combined with the subsequent factor analysis approach to determining the different coping strategies, results in variations in the factor structure revealed from one study to the next.

Development of the COPE (Carver, Scheier and Weintraub,1989), in contrast to the Ways Of Coping Measure, was theoretically guided and items set to tap a predetermined set of coping strategies. The existence of a constant set of scales and items as well as the reliable and validated brief form makes it a more popular instrument with researchers than the Way Of Coping Measure (MacArthur and MacArthur, 2004).

The full COPE is a 60 item measure that yields 15 factors that reflect active versus avoidant coping strategies (Chapter 5.4.6). It consists of two versions; a 'traitlike' version in which respondents are asked to rate the degree to which they typically use each coping strategy when under stress and a 'statelike' form in which respondents rate the degree to which they use each coping strategy to deal with a particular stressful event elected either by the subject or their assessor. Ratings are made on a four point Likert scale. Test – retest reliabilities for the COPE range from .46 to .86.

Neither The Ways Of Coping Measure nor the COPE were chosen for use in this research, largely on the pragmatic grounds that the researcher was more familiar and comfortable with administering the tool subsequently chosen.

Kidscope, developed by Spirito, Stark and Williams (1988) has the advantage of being designed purely for children and adolescents. It exists in two versions, one for subjects aged 7 to 12 years and the other for those between 13 and 18 years. Each version of Kidscope consists of two parts. The first section addresses distress experienced in relation to a specific situation nominated by the subject. The second section rates the frequency and efficacy of a range of given coping strategies in relation to that specific situation. In contrast to the two parts of the COPE scales this tool does not explore the range of coping strategies at the subject's disposal but focuses on those used in relation to a particular, nominated stressor. Test-retest reliability for Kidscope falls between .41 and .83

Kidscope was not used as a measuring tool for coping skills in this research for two main reasons. Firstly it requires individual administration, which would make administering it to an entire school year highly impractical. The second drawback to the use of this tool in the present research is the scoring and interpretation method. Designed as a screening tool for individual children Kidscope does not produce quantifiable data. Once again, with

such a large sample to be assessed the data gained through Kidscope would have been unmanageable for the purposes of this research.

The tool that was chosen for use in this research, Frydenberg and Lewis' Adolescent Coping Scales (1993) had the advantage over the above measuring tools of fulfilling all of the following criteria:

- Being easily available and well known to the researcher
- Being developed for use with young people, rather than adapted for such use
- Focusing on a general rather than a specified stressor and so tapping into the subjects' broader range of coping strategies
- Being easy to administer, score and interpret by a wide range of professionals
- Producing useful data in a form that could directly inform intervention programmes
- Forming both an assessment tool and also an intervention in its own right. This was considered useful for later school –based use of the scale.

5.4.6.2 Adolescent Coping Scale (ACS)

As with the self-esteem measuring tool, Frydenberg and Lewis' Adolescent Coping Scales are self-report scales designed to be both a clinical and a research tool, although their primary use is in supporting the psychological well-being and adaptive strategies for coping of young people. Frequently the use of the scale ***is*** the intervention, or is integral to the intervention, rather than purely a description of the problem. The data gathered can be used as part of a feedback process so that the adolescents can examine their own coping behaviour, and the process itself can be used for initiating self-directed behavioural change and to stimulate classroom discussion. To this end the interpretation of the results is idiographic rather than normative.

These self-report scales were designed to assist young people to examine their own coping behaviour in different circumstances. They consist of a Specific Form, which enables the measurement of responses to a particular self-nominated or administrator nominated concern and also a General Form which addresses how an individual copes in general.

They have been standardised in Australia for use with young people between the ages of 12 to 18 but as with the earlier scales it is claimed that they can be used meaningfully by older respondents and are broadly culture free. The scales can be administered by a range of professionals; psychologists, teachers, counsellors and others.

Respondents are rated on eighteen coping strategies that were empirically derived by use of factor analyses. These strategies are:

1. **Seek Social Support**, perhaps through sharing the problem with others.
2. **Focus On Solving The Problem.** This implies a logical and systematic approach to the problem, probably exploring a range of options.
3. **Work Hard And Achieve,** a strategy which involves commitment, ambition and industry.
4. **Worry.** This involves concern about the future and more specifically concern with happiness in the future.
5. **Invest In Close Friends.** This involves concentrating on developing close social relationships rather than focussing on the problem.
6. **Seek To Belong**. This indicates a caring and concern for relationships with others in general and more specifically concern with what others think.
7. **Wishful Thinking**, based on hope and anticipation of a positive outcome.
8. **Not Coping**.
9. **Tension Reduction**, perhaps through taking alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
10. **Social Action**, such as letting others know what is of concern and enlisting support by writing petitions or organising an activity such as a meeting or a rally.

11. **Ignore The Problem.** This involves a conscious blocking out of the problem.
12. **Self-Blame**, indicating that individuals see themselves as responsible for the concern or worry they experience.
13. **Keep To Self.** This could be through withdrawal from others and a desire to keep others from knowing about concerns.
14. **Seek Spiritual Support**. This is characterised by items which reflect prayer and belief in the assistance of a spiritual leader or God.
15. **Focus On The Positive**. This is represented by items which indicate a positive and cheerful outlook on the current situation. This includes seeing the 'bright side' of circumstances and seeing oneself as fortunate.
16. **Seek Professional Help**, denoting the use of a professional adviser such as a teacher or counsellor.
17. **Seek Relaxing Diversions**. This is characterised by items which describe leisure activities such as reading, music or painting.
18. **Physical Recreation**. This is characterised by items which relate to playing sport and keeping fit.

Using the results of these ratings the respondents' coping strategies can be conceptualised in terms of three styles:

- Problem-focused coping (Productive Coping)

- Coping by reference to others (Reference Coping)

- Non-productive coping.

Each of these styles will be found either to be used a great deal, used frequently, used sometimes, used very little or not used at all. Pupils who depend primarily on non-productive coping and avoidance strategies are empirically associated with an inability to cope.

The structured nature of the questionnaire provides for coping behaviours that might not come to mind spontaneously in less structured approaches. The final open-ended question offers respondents the opportunity to nominate ways of coping that might not be covered in the questionnaire.

The test-retest reliabilities of this instrument are moderate rather than high. About 50 per cent of the coefficients for both the Specific and the General Scale are lower than 0.70. Frydenberg and Lewis contend that stability of response is not an entirely appropriate way to assess scale reliability because coping is perceived as a dynamic phenomenon.

In this study the General Form was used to assess the subjects' general coping style. The form consists of eighteen closed questions which the subject is asked to answer on a 1-5 rating scale ranging from 'Doesn't Apply Or Don't Use' to 'Use A Great Deal'. There is a final, nineteenth question that is open-ended. Respondents should complete the form in less than 5 minutes.

None of the chosen measuring tools, discussed above, requires advanced reading or comprehension skills. This makes them ideal for use with a wide range of adolescents. They are all relatively quick to administer.

5.5 Identifying The Hypotheses

The practical research section of this work takes as its starting point a belief that there exists a tension between the subjective experience of young people on the one hand, and pupils who are identified by the professionals as having needs which require recognising and addressing on the other. Compounding the issue is the consideration of what resources are actually available to the professionals and how this practical resourcing issue impacts upon the identification of difficulties.

This thesis contends that the result of this tension and the attendant resourcing issues is the existence of an as yet unidentified cohort of vulnerable adolescents within the education system whose educational – and also potentially broader – needs thus remain unmet. Having in the preceding chapters:

- defined 'vulnerability for the purposes of this research
- reviewed a range of possible manifestations of that vulnerability
- reviewed a range of factors impacting on that vulnerability, and
- considered a range of possible indicators of that vulnerability

the hypotheses were considered in terms that might appropriately facilitate the identification of the suspected and currently unidentified vulnerable group using the indicators selected.

Given the strong links established in the preceding literature review between the psychological states representing vulnerability and pupils' educational

and social achievements, the hypotheses have been chosen on the basis that:

- this vulnerability has direct relevance to educational concerns,
- the tools used in testing the hypotheses will provide a robust means of confirming the existence of the suspected vulnerable group, and
- the tools used would be capable of enabling staff in schools simply and quickly to identify and measure vulnerability in subsequent pupil groups, and of informing useful interventions that can be implemented at school level.

PART 2: PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER 6 : HYPOTHESES

6.1 Hypothesis 1

It is hypothesised that a body of pupils exists whose self-esteem, as measured through psychometric testing, marks them out as potentially vulnerable in a variety of social and emotional areas which prior research has shown to be associated with low self-esteem. These potentially vulnerable areas include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, reduced employment prospects, drug abuse, homelessness and general unhappiness. The relationship between these areas and self-esteem is explored in Chapter 5 of this work.

Hypothesis 1

A body of pupils exists who exhibit significantly low self-esteem (the Vulnerable Group).

Testing Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 will be tested by administering a Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory to the entire Year 7 of the subject school. Pupils whose total score falls at or below 13 (low and very low) will be deemed to have low self-esteem and to be socially and emotionally vulnerable.

6.2 Hypothesis 2

It is hypothesised that a significant number of the pupils whose score on the CFSEI puts them below the designated cut off point (the Vulnerable Group) will not have come to the attention of their school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator for their emotional needs and so will not appear on the school's SEN Register at any stage of The Code Of Practice for such needs. Consequently these pupils will not be receiving any ameliorative interventions for their vulnerability. It is possible that some of these children will have been registered for learning needs.

Hypothesis 2

A significant proportion of adolescents in the Vulnerable Group will not be found on the SEN Register for emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Testing Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 will be tested by comparing the list of pupils whose self-esteem scores on the CFSEI identify them as vulnerable (the Vulnerable Group) and their school's SEN Register for EBD.

6.3 Hypothesis 3

A significant number of the pupils whose score on the CFSEI puts them below the designated cut off point (the Vulnerable Group) will perceive the locus of control in their lives to be sited externally in comparison to the control group. Such a finding would indicate a degree of learned helplessness that would further inhibit their attempts to overcome problems they might have due to their low self-esteem.

Hypothesis 3

The pupils in the Vulnerable Group have a significantly greater perception of an external locus of control in their lives than the Non-Vulnerable Group does.

Testing Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 will be tested by comparing the perceived locus of control (as measured on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale) of the Vulnerable Group as a whole with those of the Non-Vulnerable Group.

The significance of any variance noted will be measured using chi-squared tests and, as appropriate, correlation tests, using critical values at a minimum 95% level of significance.

6.4 Hypothesis 4

A significant number of the pupils whose score on the CFSEI puts them below the designated cut off point (the Vulnerable Group) will show evidence of other, deeper problems such as a preference for less functional coping strategies than those of the control group. Such a finding would suggest that these pupils' problems are deeper than low self-esteem alone. They will be disadvantaged in living with their low self-esteem due to their more limited and less adaptive coping strategies.

Hypothesis 4

The pupils in the Vulnerable Group have a significantly greater reliance on dysfunctional styles of coping with life's problems, as characterised by inadequate use of productive coping strategies or heavy reliance on non-productive coping strategies, than the Non-Vulnerable Group does.

Testing Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 will be tested firstly by comparing the coping strategies (as measured on the Adolescent Coping Scales) of the Vulnerable Group as a whole with those of the Non-Vulnerable Group and, secondly, by comparing the extent to which individual members of the Vulnerable and Non-Vulnerable Groups adopt identified dysfunctional coping styles.

The significance of any variances noted will be measured using chi-squared tests and, as appropriate, correlation tests, using critical values at a minimum 95% level of significance.

6.5 Hypothesis 5

Young people whom psychometric testing identifies as socially and emotionally vulnerable will be more likely to report a high incidence of social and emotional dysfunctional circumstances or behaviours in their lives or in the lives of their families than the Control Group. These will include factors suggesting that they, or other family members (parents or siblings), have found integration into society more than averagely problematic. Indicators of this might well include a family history of mental illness, suicide, criminal behaviour, substance abuse, absenteeism from school, employment difficulties, experience of losses, educational special needs of an emotional or behavioural nature, or relationship problems. A causal or directional link is not suggested, purely a co- existence.

Hypothesis 5

A significant proportion of pupils in the Vulnerable Group will have, or will have older family members who have, socially and emotionally dysfunctional behaviours or experiences.

Testing Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 will be tested through the administration of a semi-structured interview to a randomly selected sample of 5 pupils from the Vulnerable Group. The responses of the Vulnerable Group to this interview will be compared with those from a randomly selected sample from a Control Group made up of those whom psychometric testing put above the designated

cut-off point for vulnerability. Where possible the information gathered in this way will be supplemented through a review of any records held on the subjects at their school or by the LEA and through discussion with their Head of Year.

6.6 Hypothesis 6

Young people whom psychometric testing identifies as socially and emotionally vulnerable will be more likely to identify themselves as troubled, unhappy with themselves, unhappy with their lives and dissatisfied with the number or nature of their friendships.

Hypothesis 6

A significant proportion of pupils in the Vulnerable Group will identify themselves as unhappy with themselves.

Testing Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 will be tested along with Hypothesis 5, that is through the administration of a semi-structured interview to a randomly selected sample of 5 pupils from the Vulnerable Group. The responses of the Vulnerable Group to this interview will be compared with those from a randomly selected sample from a Control Group made up of those whom psychometric testing put above the designated cut-off point for vulnerability. Where possible the information gathered in this way will be supplemented through a review of any records held on the subjects at their school or by the LEA and through discussion with their Head of Year.

CHAPTER 7: PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH POULATION

7.1 The Cultural And Ethnic Profile Of The Subject Population

The ethnic profile of both the subject borough as a whole and the subject school in particular is changing at quite a rapid rate, not least because the area has been designated by the Home Office as one of the country's dispersal areas for asylum seekers and has a Detention Centre for asylum seekers within its bounds. The nature of the housing stock within the school's catchment area is such that asylum-seeking families coming in to the area are disproportionately likely to be housed within it.

Figures from the United Kingdom 2001 census and the subject school's own data of 2000 shows an interesting picture:

Table 6: Ethnicity Other Than White British, 2000/2001

United Kingdom	**9.1**
Subject Borough	**2.3**
Wards serving the Subject school	**7.2**
School roll	**3.23**

Figures shown as percentages of each community's total population.

As discussed in Chapters 7.2 to 7.5 the above figures show that the subject Borough as a whole was predominantly white British. It had significantly fewer families identifying themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority than the United Kingdom average. However, the wards of the subject Borough that made up the catchment area of the subject school reported 92.4 per cent white British, that is 7.6 per cent self-identifying as of an ethnicity not white British. This minority population was predominantly mixed race or Pakistani; the ethnic groups that Pathak (2000) identified as faring worst in social and economic terms. Thus the subject Borough as a whole had a much smaller ethnic minority population than the country at large but this population was disproportionately resident in the catchment area of the school.

With an ethnic minority community of 7.6 per cent, the area of the Borough that served the subject school was much closer to the national average than the rest of the Borough was. Comparison of the ethnic data from the 1991 census with that of 2001 shows that the influx of ethnic minorities into the school's catchment area was a relatively recent phenomenon. In 1991 only 4.55 per cent of the relevant wards identified themselves as from an ethnic minority; still higher than the Borough average but much lower than the 2001 figure.

Although the subject school's catchment area reported 7.6 per cent as belonging to an ethnic minority only 3.23 per cent of the school population (58 individuals) so identified. The author's professional knowledge of the

school casts doubt on the accuracy of the figures. They are believed to be based on incomplete data provided by parents and this fact explains slight discrepancies between percentages and absolute numbers. Despite this the overall trend is believed to be reliable and suggests that the 7.6 per cent ethnic minority members are disproportionately under represented in school age children. The school's Ofsted Inspection report of 2000 recorded that within that 3.23 per cent 2.8 per cent of the school population, 45 pupils, used English as a second language. This is an extremely high percentage of those who identify themselves as coming from an ethnic minority and is further evidence that many of these are first generation immigrants.

In line with national trends ethnic minority students are much more likely to be excluded from the subject school than ethnic majority students. In 2000 there were 32 fixed period exclusions, 22 per cent of these were non-white students, and 9 permanent exclusions, 11 per cent of which were of non-white students.

In addition to the expanding communities coming in to the Borough from all over the world, there are over 6000 Gypsy Traveller families in the Borough at any one time. At times when circuses, fairs or horse races are being held this population swells significantly. This is one of the highest densities of Gypsy Traveller communities in the country. Despite the legal designation of Gypsy Travellers as a distinct ethnic group there were no census or school figures for this community.

By its nature the Gypsy Traveller community is a transient population and often quite a private and close knit one. Members of this community both own houses in the area (estimates by the Local Authority Gypsy Traveller Service suggest around 50 per cent) and live on one of the 35 official sites or occasional and temporary unofficial sites.

The subject school is overwhelmingly white British in an overwhelmingly white British community. Those individuals within the school who do identify as belonging to an ethnic minority, while forming a very small minority, are likely to be either from first generation immigration (including asylum seekers) or from the Gypsy Traveller community, although no school data is available on this second group. In the case of first generation immigrants and asylum seekers it is reasonable to assume a larger cultural gap with the majority community than ethnic minorities in other areas might experience, and a range of difficulties associated with their condition. As established by Weber (1998) and The Minority Rights Group (Liegeois and Gheorghe, 1995) the Gypsy Traveller community fares significantly worse than both the host community and other minority groups on a whole range of educational, health and social deprivation indices.

7.2 Indices Of Deprivation In The Subject Borough

7.2.1 Historical And Social Context Of The Borough

This research was carried out in a northern industrial town with a population slightly below 300,000. The town has ancient roots in Roman Britain but grew most rapidly through the years of the industrial revolution on the strength of industry, farming, mining and the railways. The town is made up of a large central town and a number of satellite townships and villages with a rich agricultural hinterland. Many of the satellite communities are effectively extensions of the central town but have developed around individual collieries on the edge of town and often assume their own character and identity. In 1974 this collection of townships and the central town itself became a Metropolitan Borough with its own Council. Twenty-one Wards make up the entire Borough. Ten of these wards feature in the bottom 10% of the United Kingdom's Local Deprivation Index.

As with many predominantly white working class communities the population has been fairly stable and settled over the years. Immediately following the 1939 - 45 war displaced ex-miners from Poland, Ukraine and other areas of Eastern Europe settled in the area and some years later when many collieries closed in the north-east of England miners from the Northumberland coal fields moved into the area in large numbers. Several factors, including the town's history of horse racing, fairs and markets, have

resulted in a large Gypsy Traveller community within the borough. There is also a small Irish community in the Borough.

Until comparatively recently non White British immigration into the Borough has been low and, as discussed in Chapter 7.1 above (The Cultural And Ethnic Profile Of The Subject Population), currently only 2.3 per cent of the population identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority. The historical picture is undergoing rapid change however, not least due to the Government's asylum-seeker dispersal programme. Table 6 above shows something of the uneven nature of the ethnic profile of the Borough. The census of 2001 shows that many wards within the Borough showed no one identifying themselves as part of an ethnic minority, while other wards, including those serving the subject school, had over 7 per cent so identifying.

The subject Borough is part of the Trent Regional Health Authority. This enormous and diverse region covers Barnsley, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Rotherham and Sheffield.

7.2.2 Employment And Income

Historically the major employer in the area had been the coal fields and when the pits closed down in the early to middle 1980s the economic prosperity of the area declined dramatically over a very short time. Various government initiatives have been in place to address retraining and unemployment and the employment figures gradually rose from their lowest level. Unemployment in the Borough as a whole has hovered at around 2 to 3% above the national average for at least the last seven years. This does not represent an even spread of unemployment and there are areas of relatively high employment and others of very low employment.

Adult unemployment in the Borough as a whole stood at 6.7 per cent in 2000. This compared with an adult unemployment figure of 3.8 per cent for England as a whole. The percentage of dependent children living in non-earning households in the Borough was 23 per cent compared with 17 per cent nationally. This is reflected in the high proportion (26.4 per cent) of primary school aged pupils receiving free school meals. This figure is higher than the national average but slightly lower than in former years. In the Trent region as a whole 20 per cent of primary school pupils received free school meals (Community Development Unit, 2000).

7.2.3 Educational Attainments

The Borough also fares relatively poorly on educational indices in relation to national figures. 34 per cent of young people obtained at least 5 GCSEs grade A to C in the year 2000 compared with 45 per cent nationally. Unauthorised absences from secondary schools within the Borough were twice the national average (Community Development Unit, 2000).

7.2.4 Health Indices

The Borough has been designated as one of the Government's Health Action Zones in recognition of the relatively poor health of its inhabitants when measured on a number of indices relating to life expectancy, infant mortality, mental health, accidents and life restricting illnesses. These health indices are all recognised as having a high incidence in areas of social disadvantage. Within this initiative an Action Plan has been drawn up and the transitional years between childhood and adulthood have been targeted as a priority area. This targeting is in recognition of the key role that childhood and adolescence plays in the eventual health outcome for adults.

Within the Borough 27 per cent of Year 10 pupils are regular or occasional smokers. Half of all five-year-olds have dental caries (Community Development Unit, 2000).

Rates of accidental injury have long been recognised as correlating very positively with other indices of deprivation. In the most deprived parts of the Borough accidental injury is extremely high. In some wards the hospital admission rates for accidental injury in 0 to 14 year olds is two and a half times the average in Trent. The most common cause of deaths in children and young people is accidents, mostly road traffic accidents. The perinatal mortality rate, infant mortality rate and percentage of low birth weight babies are all higher than the Trent average (Community Development Unit, 2000).

7.3 The Subject School

The research sample was drawn from a large inner-urban comprehensive school with a catchment area predominantly within the wards of the Borough which were identified as falling within the bottom 10% on the United Kingdom's Local Deprivation Index. The Ofsted reports of 1995 and 2000 recognised that the school had 'a significant number of students who were subject to a high level of deprivation and socio-economic disadvantage and overall the socio-economic circumstance of the students' was described in these reports as 'well below the national average' (Ofsted 2000, p 2).

The majority of the pupils lived on one of two large estates of Council housing with high levels of economic and social deprivation or from an area of multiple occupancy housing where a number of transient families lived. A small number of pupils were drawn from an area of pre-war residential private housing.

The Census of 2001 showed that in the wards that made up the school's catchment area 31.6% of men between 16 and 64 years old and 48.1% of women between 16 and 59 years old were neither economically active, in full time education nor registered as retired. In 2001 fifty two pupils at the school, roughly six per cent of those eligible (13 years old and over), were registered with the Local Education Authority for an employment permit; but the number actually working was believed to be much higher (researcher's personal conversation with the Head of XXX Education Welfare Service, 23

April 2003). At the time of writing the area was the subject of an 'employment sweep' by the Local Authority with a view to prosecuting employers and families where children under the age of 13 or without a permit were found to be working. A Local Authority work permit is a legal requirement if children of school age are to have a job. Many children work without such a permit, frequently because they are below the legal minimum age to work and/or are working without the protection on hours, wages and conditions that a permit will give. Experience has shown that in these cases the child is frequently the only economically active member of a family or a significant contributor to the family's finances rather than earning a little extra pocket money. In an area with a fairly large black economy areas where the employment sweep are most likely to be productive include markets (regular and car boot), window cleaning and milk rounds and seasonal agricultural work. Other areas of employment for underage children which the police are aware of include the sex industry, the illegal drug trade and the very large trade in importing and selling alcohol and tobacco bought in mainland Europe without paying United Kingdom tax.

The school's Ofsted inspection in 2000 recorded twenty-nine per cent of the pupils as eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average figure for the same year, which stood at twenty per cent (Child Poverty Action Group, 2000).

At the time of the research there were 1795 pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 on roll. 1449 pupils were in Years 7 to 11 and 346 in Years 12 and

13. 2.8 per cent of the pupils had English as an additional language. This is higher than the national average and the figure is lent further significance in the light of the Census 2001 information that shows the Borough as a whole to have fewer families identifying themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority than the United Kingdom average. As already noted in Chapter 7.1 while the Borough has a relatively small ethnic minority population, those representatives of such a population are predominantly resident within the catchment area of the subject school. Pupils where English is seen as an additional language are more likely to come from families who have immigrated fairly recently rather than third or fourth generation immigrants. This is consistent with the common pattern of new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers frequently being housed in the poorer and older housing stock within a community.

7.4 Educational Profile Of The Pupils

The ability of the pupils on entry, as measured on Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), is well below the national average and literacy problems have been identified in both the 2000 Ofsted inspection and that of 1995. 334 pupils (23.04%) are registered as having special educational needs, which is roughly in line with the national average for a comprehensive school, but 83 of these pupils (5.7 % of the pupils on roll) have Statements of Special Educational Need. This is well above average for the country as a whole. The DfES target for Statements is currently 2% of the population. The Special Educational Needs department within the school was described as 'good' in the most recent Ofsted report and the progress of pupils on the SEN Register in Years 7 to 9 was seen as 'satisfactory'. Despite this, curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs, and their progress in Years 10 and 11 was described as 'unsatisfactory'.

7.5 Overall Standard Of The School

The most recent Ofsted report (October 2000) describes the subject school as 'working very hard to provide a good standard of education for its students' and as having 'achieved much under difficult circumstances.' In the face of the numerous problems that the school faces in terms of the educational standards of its pupils on entry, attendance difficulties and the challenges of the socio-economic background of its pupils, the school is considered to be 'an effective school that provides a good standard of education.' A comparison between the most recent Ofsted report (October 2000) and the previous report of December 1995 shows that there have been improvements in a great number of areas. Particular areas of success include the school's A level results, extra-curricular provision and the use the school makes of the community.

A detailed examination of the school's GCSE, A level and A/S level results, in comparison with their attendance records and the figures for new pupils joining the school in Years 12 and 13 suggests a school population that falls into two separate communities. Up to the end of compulsory education (the end of Year 11) there appears to be a substantial body of pupils who have poor attendance and poor attainments. GCSE results have been well below the national average and even well below the average for schools with a similar number of free school meals, for many years. The majority of pupils, who do attend school regularly, appear to achieve well. This leaves a substantial minority who have a well below average rate of attendance and

their general academic attainments and their GCSE results have a significant downward effect on the school's average. The most recent Ofsted report also commented on the adverse effect the poor attendance of this sizeable minority had on their continuity of learning. 'The school's results are badly affected by a significant proportion of students who are poor attenders or are being educated elsewhere but remain on the school's roll.' (Ofsted 2000, p12) Overall average school attendance for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 stood at 88.51 per cent at the end of the year 2000. It reached its lowest in Year 10 at 84.5 per cent. Attendance in comprehensive schools across the United Kingdom averages 89.2 per cent. Within the subject school's average figure 15 per cent of the pupils had attendances below 85 per cent. In the nine months preceding August 2001 38 pupils had triggered the Local Authority's procedure for prosecution for non school attendance.

Roughly half of the pupils in Years 12 and 13 join the school as new pupils for these years. Attendance is good and A and A/S level results are well above average and improving year on year.

The Ofsted Inspection Report of 2000 identified the following areas of weakness within the school:

- Pupils' attendance
- The breadth and relevance of the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Pupils' levels of literacy and numeracy

- The standards that pupils attain in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- The ratio of computers to students
- The provision for students with special educational needs and the match between pupils' needs and the differentiation of work that teachers provide.

Table 7 sets out a summary of the principal school data and indicators, including national comparative statistics where appropriate.

Table 7: Subject School Data And Indicators

Indices	Number	Per centage
Pupils on School Roll, Years 7 – 11	1449	100%
Pupils eligible for free school meals	421	29%
Pupils with Statement of SEN	83	5.7%
Pupils on SEN Register	334	23.05%
Permanent Exclusions (1999 - 2000)	9	0.62%
Fixed Term Exclusions (1999 - 2000)	32	2.2%
Pupils with English as an additional language	45	2.8%
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	106	7.3%
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	135	9.3%
Authorised absences	-	11.8% (7.9%*)
Unauthorised absences	-	1.8% (1.1%*)

*National comparative data.
Source: Ofsted Report 2000

CHAPTER 8: METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

8.1 Choosing The Methodology

The researcher is a working educational psychologist with responsibility for the educational and psychological health of both a large number of young people and the schools they attend. This research grew out of the on-going relationship with one particular school, the staff of which have been working in collaboration with the researcher on school improvement for several years. The objectives of this research were to answer certain academic questions but also to provide the subject school, and other secondary schools facing similar circumstances, with some realistic interventions to support and enhance the provision they are currently offering. To meet this brief an action research model was considered appropriate. The advantages and disadvantages of the action research approach are discussed further in Chapter 8.2.

The gathering of data to inform this research fell into two fairly distinct but complementary parts. The research hypotheses required the initial gathering of data from an entire school year, 274 pupils, exploring three variables; self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies. The choice of these variables is considered in Chapter 5.4. The analysis of the data gathered through this mass screening led directly to the second part of the

data gathering. For this a sample of ten subjects was chosen for further investigation.

The initial data gathering, with its large number of respondents and the need to interpret the findings against pre-existing statistical norms lent itself to the use of standardised questionnaires and a range of these was considered before the final choice of measuring tools was made (see Chapter 5.4). The advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires are discussed more fully in Chapter 8.4.

The second part of the research, requiring as it did the gathering of data from a small number of individuals, sometimes relating to the perspectives and reactions of those individuals, and possibly producing data that was highly variable from one individual to another, was better suited to a case study methodology. This was carried out through a mixture of analysis of school and LEA records, reference to other agencies where appropriate, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The advantages and disadvantages of the case study methodology are discussed further in Chapter 8.3.

8.2 Action Research

The concept and practice of action research has a long history. In 1953 Corey defined action research in the educational setting as the process through which practitioners study their own practice to solve their personal practical problems.

Action research is deliberate, solution-orientated investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. It is characterised by spiralling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and finally problem redefinition. The linked terms 'action' and 'research' highlight the essential features of trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about and/or improving curriculum, teaching and learning in a school setting (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982). It is a research methodology designed to use critical awareness of a situation to inform change, 'essentially an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p192).

Bell (1999) acknowledged the essentially practical nature of action research, centring on a problem-solving paradigm. This makes it an attractive tool for practitioners who may have identified a problem or weakness through the course of their work, which they aspire to remedy or at least investigate (Bell, 1999, p9).

In education, action research is very often a collaborative activity where practitioners work together to help one another design and carry out investigations. Frequently these are 'concerned with the everyday practical problems experienced by teachers, rather than the 'theoretical problems' defined by pure researchers within a discipline of knowledge' (Nixon, 1989).

In contrast to the above description of effective action research being carried out by the immediate stakeholders in the organisation at the focus of the research, Armstrong (1994) extols the advantages of externally sourced research. He contends that the objectivity that can be gained by using an external source for the investigation increases the reliability of the investigation and reduces the time and financial costs to the company or organisation owning the problem.

It is the contention of this research that the relationship between the researcher and the subject school was sufficiently flexible and dynamic for the advantages of both models, that is participant researcher and objective researcher, to be accessed.

As an Educational Psychologist working in the subject school for several years prior to the research the researcher was very much part of a team with the Senior Management of the school, working towards the shared goal of school improvement. The research grew naturally out of on-going work at the school identified jointly between the school staff and the researcher. The research design and implementation was discussed with these staff

members all the way along as were the most effective ways of turning the research findings into school action.

Balanced against this collaborative approach was the researcher's broader knowledge of the needs of the community, her understanding of the importance of systematically and scientifically investigating the situation as it existed in order to inform any ameliorative action and her research skills. The Senior Management of the subject school has had an awareness of the situation under consideration for a number of years but has largely proved ineffectual in taking decisive action. The reasons for this probably include an incomplete awareness of the situation, difficulty in knowing what to do, no named individual or individuals with direct responsibility for the situation, limited time and competing or conflicting priorities within the school. There is also the possibility of a fear that publicly acknowledging a difficult situation might attract negative judgements on the school. The researcher, acting as Armstrong's 'external source' was able to cut through some of this apparent inertia.

The model used offers the school all the advantages of Armstrong's 'objective outsider' whilst maintaining their sense of ownership, which is so essential if the school staff are to both accept the findings and more importantly accept responsibility for implementing the changes recommended. Implementation of the recommendations of this research is likely to be on going for several years to come with the ownership and onus

for action increasingly devolving to the staff employed directly by the school as the researcher's role in this area diminishes.

8.3 Case Studies

8.3.1 The Advantages Of Case Study Methodology

As a method of collecting data case studies are much favoured by researchers into areas that involve enquiry into real life experiences and which are likely to generate variables that are hard to predict, manipulate or control. They contain within their design sufficient flexibility to allow the researcher to pursue lines of enquiry that are not predicted at the start of the research but which are revealed along the way (Wellington, 1996). As such they are considered ideal for psychological and educational research such as the present study.

Case studies often involve direct observation, interviewing and discussion. This offers the advantage of face-to-face exchanges between the researcher and the subject. Additionally the case study approach allows a case record to be built up, a document which files the material used, dates and 'raw' information; hunches, intuitions and impressions apparent at the time, which ultimately provide a lasting record which researchers can 'learn lessons from' (Anderson, 1990).

Case studies are particularly appropriate for the assimilation of information on one aspect of a problem within a fairly constrained period of time, thus providing an opportunity of accessing complex issues in detail. They provide an in-depth examination of the processes involved in the functioning of one

particular setting or 'unit' where the unit may be a school, a person or a collection of colleagues within an 'employing organisation (Wellington, 1996, p.39).

One of the principal advantages of case studies in human enquiry is the opportunity they provide for amalgamating a range of data acquired through the use of several different research tools. They facilitate an invaluable synthesis of, and comparison between, qualitative and quantitative data. As such they provide a triangulation approach, 'the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p254). They reflect a holistic, global perspective from which the problem or issue is viewed as opposed to a study considering merely one component of those factors constituting the 'whole'. Such depth rarely manifests itself in a large-scale piece of research utilising tools such as questionnaires and surveys alone.

8.3.2 The Disadvantages Of Case Study Methodology

One potential weakness of the case study approach is in the generalising of findings to a wider population. (Bell, 1999, p11). A further, and related, problem inherent in the use of case studies is that of sample size. The depth and level of involvement required in case study research has ramifications for the size of sample that can realistically be used within a given time limit. As the sample size decreases so questions must be asked about generalising the results.

In the present research the findings and recommendations were primarily based upon data gathered through the screening by questionnaire of 100 per cent of the research sample. The case studies that followed on from this mass screening were used to explore and amplify the findings of that screening.

The stated aim of the present research was two-fold. In addition to answering academic questions about adolescent vulnerability it was designed as a piece of action research with very practical applications for the subject school. Further generalisation to other secondary schools was assumed to be a natural extension, though not the prime focus, of this work. At the time of writing, with the researcher's on-going professional involvement, the results and recommendations of this research have been increasingly adopted by the subject school and its six feeder primary schools for the past two years, with every early sign of efficacy.

It is further contended that there is an enormous amount of 'generalisability' from this research to many other schools. The degree of generalisability is related to the degree to which any other school shares the characteristics of the subject school. Assessing this is well within the everyday capabilities of the professionals who would be considering the work and the implications for their setting. Competent educational professionals will be experienced in making such judgements as they adapt and develop their practice in the light of ongoing research on a daily basis. There are a great many large, urban comprehensive schools with a predominantly white, working class, deprived catchment area across the country. Indeed the researcher had little difficulty in finding several schools with largely similar profiles within the vicinity of the subject school within which to conduct the pilot study for this research. As the profile of other schools varies from the subject school so increased caution must be used in adopting the recommendations, but exercising caution in adapting the recommendations would be good professional practice in any setting.

A further weakness inherent to case study methodology is that of the time case studies take to compile. It could be the case that by the time a case record is compiled and all the data gathered by the various methodological tools employed collated and interpreted some information may be out of date, reducing the generalisability or 'relatability' of the findings (Bassey, 1981, p85).

In the present study it is acknowledged as possible that the time taken to complete the research had some implications for the internal consistency of that research. The subjects were assessed on certain variables using questionnaires during the first term of academic Year 7. The final interviews that concluded the investigations into those variables were not held until the final term of academic Year 7. In many cases this was not seen to be a problem but the case of the child identified as 'Pupil 4' in the case studies illustrates a potential difficulty. This pupil had been identified as highly vulnerable on the questionnaire assessments of self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies. Later investigations through interview conflicted with this earlier assessment and left unanswered questions, which are explored further in Chapter 9.6.1 of this work.

One further issue relating to the time taken to complete case studies and the present work is in the ability to offer the full benefit of the findings to the cohort of pupils from which the sample was drawn. The principal purpose of this research was to provide recommendations that could be implemented in the subject school and other schools year on year with future cohorts of students. Even with the research sample, although it was too late to implement all of the recommendations for their academic year the very act of focussing the attention of the school staff on the issues did lead to benefits for the individual subjects and certainly for the school as an organism in its own right.

For all the above reasons the research undertaken in this work, that is the exploration of complex human experiences, the need to triangulate through several sources and the desire for information gathered within a set time frame, is ideally suited to case study methodology.

8.4 Questionnaires

8.4.1 The Advantages Of Questionnaires For Data Gathering

Questionnaires are a list of pre-set questions, often fairly closed in nature, given to respondents in the same order. They have many strengths, mostly based on their simplicity. They can be administered in a variety of ways: in person, by post, at a group presentation or over the telephone. When delivered in person they become an interview, and these have been dealt with under a later section of this work.

Questionnaires have the benefit of being time efficient in that once they have been devised and piloted large numbers of respondents can be targeted. Where the questions used are of a closed nature, the data they yield, by their quantitative nature, should be relatively easy to collate and with standardised questionnaires such as in this research the figures can be compared to pre-established normative distributions. Such data should have a high degree of reliability, that is, as each individual is responding to an identical question in an identical order any differences in response should truly represent differences between respondents. Furthermore the data produced should be capable of being checked by other researchers to yield the same results. Data thus produced can be used to generate theories that can be explored through further consideration or, as in this case, to test existing hypotheses.

A further advantage of the use of questionnaires comes from their scope for anonymity. If this can be assured the respondents to a questionnaire should feel less restrained and inhibited than they might do in an interview and so might avoid the temptation to deliver what they believe to be acceptable or expected responses (Bell, 1999).

8.4.2 The Disadvantages Of Questionnaires For Data Gathering

Despite the seeming objectivity of written questions and answers, their interpretation depends on the use of unambiguous vocabulary by both the researcher and the respondent. In the present study the pilot studies revealed certain potential weaknesses in this area which were addressed (see Chapter 8.7.2).

Respondents might deliver misinformation deliberately. Despite attempts at assuring anonymity respondents might feel that they could be identified, and want to be seen to present a particular case. Alternatively, respondents might deliver misinformation because of faulty memories or a reluctance to admit even in secret to the truth.

Respondents have no opportunity to reply to questions that are not asked. This means that the development of new hypotheses is shaped by the theories that have already been thought of (Brown and Dowling,1998). This can be overcome to a certain extent by the use of the catch-all question: 'Do you have any further comments?' In the present study the Adolescent Coping Skills questionnaire had such a question but the Self-Esteem and Locus of Control Questionnaires did not.

In postal questionnaires the very distance between researcher and respondent, which could be seen as an aid to objectivity, could act as a psychological barrier. Respondents might regard such a distant request

from a researcher they have never met or heard of as having a fairly low priority. This could impact upon the validity of the data so obtained.

Whilst open-ended questions help to overcome some of the problems associated with purely statistically based data, they bring their own problems in terms of categorising and coding the resultant data.

Questionnaires have a notoriously unpredictable response rate (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981, p181) and this may bias the results quite seriously. In the present research careful consideration was given to how to maximise access to the research population while minimising the disruption or inconvenience to the teaching staff. The questionnaires were administered during a lesson that all of the population were supposed to attend and which had LSAs in attendance to assist students with limited reading skills. Despite these precautions there was a worryingly large number of unaccessed or incompletely accessed members of the research population.

It is important for the researcher to know the circumstances of questionnaire administration. How much help respondents had in completing the questionnaires and whether or not they discussed their responses prior to completion of the questionnaire can greatly affect the resulting data as is discussed in Chapter 8.8 Administering The Questionnaires and Chapter 9.1 Number Of Responses.

In the present research extensive pilot studies helped to address some of the difficulties inherent in the use of questionnaires. Although the questionnaires used in the initial data gathering were in the form of pre-existing standardised assessments slight changes were able to be made to reduce ambiguity (see Chapter 8.7 The Pilot Studies)

8.5 Interviews

The format of an interview can vary greatly. It can be an individual session, with one researcher and one interviewee, as in the present research, or carried out with groups of interviewees at once. Interviews can vary on a continuum from totally free form with unstructured talk around a subject to a highly structured form which is closer to a questionnaire delivered personally. The first tends to yield qualitative data, frequently of a nature unpredicted or directed by the interviewer. The latter produces quantitative data. Most interviews fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Robson (1993) acknowledged a sub-type of interview, the semi-structured interview, and this is the type used in the present research. While still relying on the responses generated by the interviewee to shape the direction of the interview a prescribed, sequential set of questions gave structure to the process, ensured some consistency between subjects and generated data that could be analysed in relation to the research questions. The exact wording and amount of time and attention given to each area was flexible in the light of the interviewees' responses and this method, according to Powney and Watts (1987) gave spontaneity and flexibility to the process.

8.5.1 The Advantages of Interviews For Data Gathering

Interviews are a very flexible tool. Interviews can be used to extract simple factual information from people, to ask people about their attitudes, their past, present or future behaviour or their motives, feelings and other emotions that cannot be observed directly. They can explore each issue in as much depth, or as superficially as seems appropriate at the time. It is not necessary to stick to a fixed agenda. Issues of relevance, which were not anticipated, can be accommodated. This makes the interview an ideal tool for generating new hypotheses and theories.

Interviews provide a compromise between the highly structured approach of the questionnaire and the more in-depth approach of participant observation. The freer the form of the interview the more chance there is that issues considered important to the subject or not considered by the interviewer can emerge which might not otherwise have done. The more highly structured the interview the easier it is to obtain quantitative data, which are easier to process statistically. The more structured an interview the more tightly controlled the time it takes can be.

There is an opportunity to clarify ambiguity in an interview that is not afforded by a questionnaire.

Group interviews have the further advantage of being able to elicit information from several people at once, and so are time efficient. They can

help respondents to feel more relaxed and confident, and thoughts from one respondent can sometimes initiate ideas from another.

8.5.2 The Disadvantages Of Interviews For Data Gathering

Conducting an interview is a face to face interaction. It is fraught with many of the difficulties that attend ordinary day to day social interactions, and has many extra dimensions of its own. These problems start with the need to make initial contact with the interviewee, to establish their trust and co-operation, and to obtain permission to interview them. Whether this first contact is by telephone, letter, or in person, it is important that the interviewee is told clearly at this time about the purpose of the interview, the encroachment into their time it will make, and the use the data will be put to. Whilst many potential interviewees might agree in principle with the request to grant an interview, their reservations might make a commitment to a firm date rather harder to obtain.

Interviews have been criticised as being not as reliable as questionnaires and not as valid as participant observation (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995). Reliability through more quantitative data increases with the degree of structure in the interview format but at the increasing risk of being stultified and dry, and missing major issues.

There can be little certainty that responses are 'truthful'. The face-to-face nature of interviews might make respondents keen to present themselves in the best light and to deliver what they believe to be expected or acceptable replies.

The stated motives and attitudes of people might be what they genuinely believe to be true, but might not reflect how they would act in real life situations (La Pierre, 1934).

There is always the possibility of researcher bias in an interview. The responses given by the interviewee need to be interpreted, and this interpretation will be affected by the interviewer's understanding and personal constructs. Past studies have shown conflicting conclusions from similar data sources due to the pre-conceptions of the researcher interpreting them (Shipman, 1981).

The relative status of the interviewer and the interviewee has long been established as a confounding factor in interviews (Labov, 1973). The gender, age, race, culture and perceived power relationship of interviewer and interviewee all have the potential to influence the outcome of the interview (Burgess, 1982).

During the course of the interview the interviewer assumes a more purposeful, active and directive role than would be the case during normal conversation. This must be balanced by the need to avoid displaying expressions of approval or disapproval. Encouragement to continue must be neutral of any value judgements. The success of an interview can depend heavily upon the interpersonal skills of the interviewer, their ability to establish rapport, to keep the interview focused and to recognise important issues quickly and respond to them.

8.6 Ethical Considerations

'Good psychological research is possible only if there is mutual respect and confidence between investigators and participants' (The British Psychological Society, 1985). It is strongly maintained that in the present work the researcher had and continues to have an excellent relationship, characterised by mutual respect and confidence, with the subject school of this work. Along with the researcher's duty as an educational psychologist to conform to the profession's ethical principles for research with human participants the maintenance and development of that relationship strongly dictated that consideration be given to the ethical aspects of methodological design.

In accordance with the guidelines established by the British Psychological Society the research was considered from the standpoint of all the participants, ensuring that their participation would not constitute any threat to their psychological wellbeing, health, values or dignity. In the present case the 'participants' could be seen as falling into two groups;

1. The subject school itself as represented by the Senior Management Team and in particular the SENCo and Deputy Head Teacher who was the main point of contact.
2. The individual students in Year 7 of the subject school.

The research design was primarily aimed at instituting changes to the school system to benefit future cohorts of students, both in the subject school and in

other schools that choose to implement the research recommendations. In addition the National Curriculum Year that formed the research population were expected to, and did, benefit to a considerable degree from the research. It is maintained that neither group, school body nor individual students, had at any time any threat to their psychological wellbeing, health, values or dignity. The bases for this assertion are considered below.

8.6.1 Consent

8.6.1.1 The School's Consent

This research was conceived and designed in collaboration with the school staff and was without any doubt intended to be for the benefit of both the subject school and other schools who chose to use the results and recommendations. Indeed, although the research was designed and conducted by the researcher the results were always owned by the school. This collaboration meant that the school, as represented by the SENCo and Deputy Head, were fully informed about both activities and rationale relating to the work.

It is believed that the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the school staff is sufficiently equal in authority that the school's consent was given with full understanding and with no hint of coercion or perceived pressure on the decision.

8.6.1.2 The Students' Consent

The school's Senior Management, acting in loco parentis for the students, gave permission for them to be involved. As a matter of courtesy the parents of all students were informed through the school's newsletter that a research project was taking place in collaboration with the educational psychologist. They were told that some of their children, most likely those in Year 7, would be involved in various questionnaires during lesson time and that it was hoped that the results would benefit the whole school. Parents were invited to enquire further if they wanted any more information on this project. To the best of the researcher's knowledge no such requests were received although they might have been made and dealt with informally at individual form tutor level.

The students themselves were given a brief oral explanation of the purpose of the questionnaires at the time of their completion. This was treated as any other school task and no specific consent was asked of the students.

When the ten students were chosen for the case studies letters were sent home to their parents informing them that as a follow up to the questionnaires that had been completed earlier in the year their child had been selected for an interview with the educational psychologist. They were assured that all data would be kept strictly confidential. The corollary of this confidentiality was that they would not be able to discuss their child's interview with either school staff (who would not know individual results) or

the educational psychologist. They were told that consent would be assumed if they had not contacted the school within two weeks of the date of posting. These letters were posted rather than delivered through the students to maximise the chance of them arriving with the parents. No objections were received.

Each student who attended the interviews was given an explanation of the research commensurate with their interest and understanding. Several of the students showed considerable interest and much time was spent discussing both the broader issues of research as well as their participation. All students were assured of confidentiality and that their participation was purely voluntary. They were told that they could end the interview at any time.

8.6.2 Debriefing

As action research the school was actively involved in the process all the way along. The SMT of the subject school was shown a draft of the research before it was produced in a form for anyone else to see. This was in fact a very easy requirement to fulfil as the research was part of on-going work with the school who were very keen to have access to the work to inform their practice.

There have been regular sessions held with a range of different sections of the school staff to inform them of the findings and to discuss the implications for the school. These are on going but, at the time of writing, in addition to the numerous discussions that took place during the research period have included:

- Meetings with the SENCo/Deputy Head to plan how best to use the research.
- A presentation to the Head Teacher, Senior Management Team and certain governors.
- INSET training to look at the implications for Learning Mentors and LSAs particularly in relation to the school's behaviour policy and the Learning Support Centre.
- Numerous meetings with the newly appointed Transition Co-ordinator, some of these being held at the feeder primary schools with the primary school SENCos.

- The school has informed parents in their newsletter that the research has been completed but that this is embedded in a longer-term project of benefit to the whole school community. Once again requests for further details were invited but none were received.

8.6.3 Confidentiality

A frequently faced educational dilemma occurs when certain professionals are privy to facts about students that might assist other professionals in their dealings with those students but which the subjects might not want generally known or which, in the wrong hands, could disadvantage the subjects. This tension between the competing demands for confidentiality of sensitive information on subjects on the one hand and broader access to potentially useful findings on the other was a very real issue in the present research. As the recommendations made are expected to inform the psychological screening of future Year 7s it is vital that protective measures put into place for the initial research are not eroded over the years and as the system devolves more and more onto the school staff. This issue is considered further in Chapter 12.6 where the dangers of labelling subjects and of depending on what might be false positives are discussed.

In the present research a decision was made and a commitment given to the subject school that neither it nor individual subjects would be identified in the work except internally to the school management in so far as was necessary for the running of the research. Individual students had to be identified as part of the study in order to gain access to them and to the school/LEA held information on them and to request permission from their parents for the interviews to take place.

Students were assured their individual responses would not be attributable to them and great efforts were made to demonstrate this by putting all completed questionnaires into a sealed envelope in front of them on completion.

8.6.4 Protection Of Participants/Giving Advice

Researchers have a primary responsibility to protect participants from physical and mental harm during investigations. It is maintained that the students who took part in this research were not in danger of suffering any harm during the research. Indeed the very act of focussing on their psychological functioning and the lessons that many of their PSE teachers created on the backs of the questionnaires into self-esteem, coping strategies and locus of control are considered to be beneficial to the participants.

During the case study interviews certain of the subjects revealed potential areas of conflict in their lives. It was not appropriate to offer any direct interventions at the time of these interviews but it was suggested to the students that they might like to discuss these issues with one of the school's learning mentors at a later date.

As part of this research young people were being identified as potentially vulnerable but by the time the present research was finished the recommendations made to overcome that vulnerability were largely too late for maximum efficacy. This was justified on the grounds that the research has created a tool for the identification and support of later cohorts of students but this still leaves the issue of the research sample. It is contended that although the cohort of students who formed the research sample did not gain maximum benefit from the research in terms of either

the transition arrangements or targeted support for the most vulnerable among them there was still a substantial improvement in their situation through the general improvements to the school's pastoral care and behaviour policy.

8.7 The Pilot Studies

Prior to the main study a series of Pilot Studies was conducted. The purpose of these was to assess ease of administration of the measuring tools, the pupils' reactions to the task, the ease of collating and interpreting the data, the views of the school staff and any other issues that such a procedure might bring to light.

8.7.1 Administering The Pilot Studies For The Questionnaires

The pilot sessions for the questionnaire took place in three different schools, none of which were the school used for the main study.

A sample pack of three questionnaires:

The Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventories For Children, Second Edition (CFSEI-2)

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus Of Control Scale and

Adolescent Coping Scales (ACS)

plus a front cover for the pupils and a letter requesting feedback from the administering teachers was put together and discussed with various educationalists including teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, Head teachers and educational psychologists. Following this the pack was administered to three groups of pupils, the pupil data collected and marked and the exercise discussed with the teaching staff.

Initially a teacher taking a PSE lesson with a lower ability Year 7 class in a small rural comprehensive school administered the pack of questionnaires. This was done with a two-fold intention. Firstly it facilitated the assessment of the demands that administering the pack would be likely to make upon the teacher and the timetable. Secondly it allowed for the assessment of the ability of pupils with a range of special educational needs and relatively low literacy skills to understand and follow the instructions and to cope with the demands of the content.

The second Pilot Study involved administering the questionnaires to one class each from Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 at a medium sized rural comprehensive school. Discussion then took place with the pastoral and SEN staff as to the practical application of knowledge gained from such a study and intervention programmes possible within the school.

The final Pilot Study involved administering the questionnaires to the entire Year 7 of an inner-urban comprehensive school with a catchment area very similar to that of the school used for the main study. This allowed for a final assessment of the amended questionnaire pack.

The administering staff in all three of the pilot schools commented on how seriously the pupils took the task and on how much they enjoyed the novel activity, the chance to focus on their own lives and the thought that they were contributing to a larger research project.

8.7.2 Refining The Design Of The Questionnaires In The Light Of The Pilot Studies

As a result of the pilot tests very few changes to the questionnaires themselves were felt necessary. Slight changes were made to the front cover of the pack. These changes made the covers clearer and less cluttered and reduced the amount of reading and writing necessary to complete them by pre-printing the date and giving tick boxes for 'Boy' or 'Girl'. A column for the eventual scores to be recorded on was added.

In addition certain small changes were made to the wording of the questionnaires. These alterations in vocabulary were made where the original North American English wording used in the Self-Esteem Inventories and the Locus of Control Scales had led to some confusion or where simpler vocabulary was deemed appropriate. These amendments are not considered to have affected the validity or reliability of the assessment in any way. The amendments made were:

Original Wording	Amendment
Self-Esteem Inventories	
'quit'	'give up'
'quitting'	'giving up'
'angry at me'	'angry with me'
'scold'	'told off'
'discouraged'	'put off'

Locus of Control Scales

'kids are just plain smarter'	'children are more intelligent'
'don't fool with them'	'leave them alone'
'getting good grades'	'scoring high marks'

No changes were made to the Adolescent Coping Scales. Further it was noted that on occasions the phraseology of some of the Self-Esteem questions made them less clear than they could be. For example, question 12 states, 'I have never taken anything that does not belong to me.' The respondent then has to tick either 'Yes' or 'No'. The double negative in the statement rather clouds the meaning. This was not the only example of what was considered to be fairly poor English usage. After careful consideration it was decided that if necessary a simple explanation, given at the time of administration, was likely to compromise the integrity of the assessment tool less than altering the wording of the questionnaire substantially at this point.

Additionally marking templates and score sheets were devised following the collection of the Pilot Study data. A copy of the final survey questionnaire pack is contained at Appendix 1.

Following the Pilot Studies and discussions with various educational professionals it was decided to conduct the main study with the entire Year 7 of the subject school as an early screening process. It was acknowledged that emotional and behavioural dysfunction was likely to be more immediately obvious or identifiable in slightly older adolescents, such as

those in Year 10 or 11. However, identification without the opportunity for intervention was not thought to be the most useful approach in a piece of action research. This work was designed to be of functional value to front line workers with young people. If Year 7 were screened on entry to the school teachers thought that it would allow time for interventions to follow the identification of pupils deemed to be vulnerable. Such an approach would be further justified if, as the earlier theoretical section of this thesis suggests, older pupils with emotional and social vulnerability were more likely to have absented themselves from school on a permanent or semi-permanent basis by the time they reach Year 10.

An examination of the Year by Year attendance figures (Table 8) suggests that absenteeism, both authorised and unauthorised, is at its lowest in Year 7, when the pupils are new to the school, and reaches a peak in Year 10. This would support the decision to focus attempts to identify problems before they become too ingrained on Year 7 pupils.

Table 8: Attendance Data

Year Group	% Authorised Abscences	% Unauth. Abscences	No. Pupils ≥1 Unauth. Absc	No. Pupils With < 85% Attendance
7	7.76%	0.42%	15	35
8	8.61%	0.75%	21	55
9	11.40%	0.91%	35	80
10	13.20%	2.30%	42	76
11	9.55%	2.65%	59	68
Totals	10.09%	1.40%	172	314

Source: Educational Welfare Service, December 2000

Early identification not only allows time for early intervention it also increases the likelihood that dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours are less ingrained and intractable in the individual. Earlier research suggests that those pupils experiencing troubled lives in Years 10 and 11 probably had the seeds of their troubles (external circumstances or inadequate internal coping strategies) already in place in their earlier years.

8.7.3 Piloting The Interviews

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were to be tested through semi-structured, one-to-one interviews of a small sample of the pupils from the group deemed to be vulnerable on the earlier questionnaire and of a small sample of pupils chosen from those pupils not identified as vulnerable. The questionnaire that the interview was based on was made up of 4 sections: Home and Family, School Life, Social Life and Expectations and Ambitions. There were 29 questions in all.

Two pupils, one from the Vulnerable Group and one from the group not identified as vulnerable were interviewed during the pilot stage. These pilot interviews took 45 minutes and 40 minutes respectively. This was thought to be too long to ask pupils who were being asked to participate voluntarily to take part in such an intense process with an adult they did not know. In the course of the researcher's work as an Educational Psychologist it would be customary to administer such an interview on a third or fourth meeting and with the subject understanding clearly what they would get out of it.

Administering the pilot questionnaires highlighted just how sensitive and personal some of the questions were. In a therapeutic setting when it is established that the subject has difficulties and that the interviewer's role is to be supportive it is much easier to enquire about drug abuse and criminal histories. When a child has been taken from their class almost at random, even though all parents were informed that their child would be interviewed,

the questions appeared much more intrusive and potentially unnerving for the subject.

To address the above two issues the questionnaire was shortened considerably. Some of the questions were conflated but some were omitted entirely from the structured part of the interview. The final questionnaire had 23 questions. The interviewer's experience would be relied upon to tease out the sensitive issues if and how it appeared appropriate. The order of the questions was also changed so that the more comfortable questions about school life were asked before the sections on friendships, social behaviours and finally the section on the subject's family. The final version of the questionnaire that the interviews were based upon is in Appendix 2.

8.8 Administering The Questionnaires

There were 274 pupils in year 7 of the subject school. These pupils were divided into ten roughly equal, mixed-ability classes for Pastoral and Social Education (PSE) lessons, which they took with their form tutors. Liaising with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator these form tutors were asked to administer the questionnaires to all the pupils in their PSE lesson in a certain week. They were asked to ensure that the atmosphere in the lesson was conducive to the pupils taking the task seriously and to provide as much assistance as they deemed appropriate to the needs of their pupils but to ensure that the pupils worked alone. Pupils were asked, through their teachers, to be as honest as possible and to work through the packs as quickly as possible giving first thoughts rather than deliberating. They were assured of the confidentiality of their answers and teachers were asked to make sure that the pupils understood that their completed answer sheets would be placed inside an envelope that would be sealed in front of them.

As in the Pilot Studies a sheet of paper was provided for each teacher to record any comments made by the pupils or any observations they had to make about the task.

8.9 Administering The Interviews

The 5 pupils who had the lowest overall self-esteem scores were chosen to form the Vulnerable Group interviewees. These pupils were identified as Group 1 on the paperwork that went into school and might have been seen by pupils or staff. Five pupils were chosen from the High and Very High scores on the self-esteem inventory. This latter group of pupils, identified as Group 2, was as many standard deviations above the mean as the Vulnerable Group interviewees were below it. Letters were written to the parents of these 10 pupils asking them to inform the school if they objected to their child being interviewed, as part of a study into child development, by the school's Educational Psychologist. No replies were received by the due date and so a time-table was arranged with the school secretaries. This was based on the pupils' lesson timetable. On the day of the interviews it was discovered that one of the Vulnerable Group had moved from the area and another had been permanently excluded the week before. For this reason only 3 pupils from Group I were interviewed and so only three from Group 2.

Pupils were sent for individually and interviewed in their Year head's office. The setting was relaxed (comfy chairs and the offer of a drink) and all pupils were assured of two things:

I. The session was entirely voluntary. Subjects could decline to take part at any time.

II. The interview was confidential. No names would ever be used once the interview was over and there would be no feedback to parents or teachers.

In practice it was also necessary to reassure some of the subjects that they were not deemed to be in trouble.

CHAPTER 9 : RESULTS

9.1 Number Of Responses

238 packs of questionnaires were returned out of a possible 274. This suggests that 36 pupils on the school roll, 13.1 per cent, did not complete the assessment. Local Education Authority data reveals an average absentee rate at the school of 8.18 %, made up of 7.76% authorised and 0.42% unauthorised absences for Year 7. That would equate to an expected 22 absentees. Examination of the school attendance records for the week in which the survey was conducted shows 18 of the pupils who failed to return questionnaires to have explainable absences (sickness, recorded absence, etcetera). The other 18 pupils, however, appeared to have no recorded absences during the week, 7 of these being on the SEN register. It is likely that some pupils were out of their class for legitimate reasons such as music lessons or were receiving SEN support during the survey time, but there appears to be a substantial level of residual unexplained absenteeism.

The last two Ofsted Inspections of the school highlighted truancy as a school problem. The researcher's professional knowledge of the school suggests that in addition to any recorded absences there will be a substantial amount of internal truancy, which would not be reflected in the recorded data (see Chapter 10.1 below).

Of the 36 pupils who failed to return questionnaires 17 appear on the SEN Register. Of these, 7 can be accounted for by authorised absences and a further 3 for procedural reasons related principally to management of their physical handicaps. These 17 absentees represent approximately 23% of Year 7 SEN-registered pupils, and it is clearly a particular concern that so many pupils of potential significance to this work did not participate. This is discussed further in Chapter 10.1 below.

Of the 238 pupils who did take part in the survey 8 failed to complete the Self-Esteem Inventory adequately. Of these, four scored at a level on the work they did complete that was sufficient to show that their measured Self-Esteem would be highly unlikely to fall in either the low or the very low range. It was not possible to predict scores for the other four pupils, three of whom were SEN-registered. Three pupils failed to complete the Locus of Control Scales. These three pupils were all from the group whose papers had already been discarded due to their incomplete Self-Esteem assessment. Of the 230 pupils who completed the Self-Esteem and Locus of Control assessments two failed to complete the Adolescent Coping Scales assessment. Neither of these fell in the low or very low self-esteem range.

The 230 pupils who completed the Self-Esteem and Locus of Control questionnaires adequately, 83.9% of the possible total, is called the sample from this point on. Results for the Adolescent Coping Scales assessment were analysed using the 228 valid responses, and any sample percentages were adjusted accordingly.

A summary of the raw data scores is contained at Appendix 3.

9.2 Results Of Hypothesis 1

'A body of pupils exists which exhibit significantly low self-esteem. This will be called the Vulnerable Group.'

Out of the 230 respondents in the sample 27 pupils (11.7 %) fell within the 'low' range and a further 22 pupils (9.6% of the sample) fell within the 'very low' range. Thus 49/230 pupils, 21.3 % of the sample, fell within the pre-set criteria for the Vulnerable Group; that is they were found to have either low or very low self-esteem (see Table 9).

Table 9: The Existence Of A Vulnerable Group

	Entire Sample	Low Self-Esteem	Very Low Self-Esteem	Vulnerable (Low + V. Low Self-Esteem)
n. pupils	230	27	22	49
% of sample	100	11.7	9.6	21.3

There are a number of interesting and significant points of variance between the distribution of Self-Esteem scores in the Sample used for this research (Year 7 of the subject school) and the standardised CFSEI-2 distribution (see Tables 1 and 4). The cut-off scores of 13, representing low self-esteem, and 10 representing very low self-esteem, were selected on the basis that these have been shown to indicate levels potentially significant in affecting individuals' happiness and capacity to achieve. On the basis of the

standardised CFSEI-2 distributions a score of 13 would lie at the 12th percentile ranking, and a score of 10 would lie at the 7th percentile ranking. This would suggest that 13% of total responses would score 13 or below, within which 7% of all responses would score 10 or below.

In the Sample population it was found that:

- 21.3% of responses scored 13 or below, within which 9.6% of responses scored 10 and below, indicating markedly higher volumes of low and very low self-esteem scores than would be indicated by the standardised model. These ratios, and the distribution pattern of overall self-esteem scores, showed a variance against the standardised ratios that was significant to a 99% level of confidence ;

- The sample mean was 17.78, against a standardised mean of 19.17. This indicated lower overall self-esteem, the variance again being significant to a 99% level of confidence;

- The sample standard deviation was 4.8 against a standardised standard deviation of 4.45, and the sample coefficient of variation was 0.27 against a standardised coefficient of 0.23, indicating a broader dispersion of responses; and

- The sample distribution was negatively skewed (-.536 skew, mean 17.78, median/mode 19), with a range of 5-25 and a bunching of responses in the 19-23 range (high intermediate to high self-esteem) offsetting the elongated tail of low score responses.

Gender Composition

The Vulnerable Group was made up of 21 females and 28 males. Thus the gender composition of the total sample was 46.5% female and 53.5 % male while the Vulnerable Group was 42.85% female and 57 % male (see Table 10). A chi-squared test was conducted to investigate the significance of this gender balance. The results confirmed that although there were proportionally more males in the Vulnerable Group than in the entire sample this was not a significant change in the gender balance ($\chi^2 = 0.34$; df = 1; p = 5.6209E-01).

Table 10: Gender Distribution In Total Sample And In The Vulnerable Group

	Female	Male
Total Sample	46.5 %	53.5 %
Vulnerable Group	42.85 %	57.0 %

Gender distribution analysis of self-esteem scores indicates broad similarity between males' and females' responses. Males' scores showed the lower mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation scores, with a range of 5-25. 22.8% of responses showed scores of 13 and below, and 9.8% of responses at 10 or below. Bunching was in evidence in responses scoring 18-22, which represented 47.8% of the 123 responses. Females' responses showed a higher mean score (18.07), though with a higher standard deviation. Scores were generally in a narrower range, however, (9-25) apart from one outlier score of 5. 19.6% of females' responses were scored 13 or below -- a lower proportion than for the boys - and 9.35% of responses scored 10 and below. There was a slightly lower incidence of bunching of females' responses, albeit in a marginally higher scoring range - 45.8% of responses being in the 19-23 range. No statistically significant differences between males' and females' responses were noted. In both cases the proportions of responses below 13 and 10 respectively showed variances against the standardised scores significant to a 99% level of confidence.

Self-Esteem Sub-Test Analysis

While the overall Self-Esteem score was used to identify the pupils who fell into the Vulnerable Group the psychometric tool used (Battle,CFSEI-2) analysed subjects' self-esteem in terms of four types of self-esteem: General, Academic, Social and Parental (see Chapter 5.4.4.2). Distribution

tables of self-esteem scores and percentiles for the sample, broken down into the four sub-tests, are shown below at Tables 11, 12 and 13.

Table 11: Self-Esteem Inventories: Sample Means And Standard Deviations

Subtest	Mean	SD
Overall	17.78	4.8
General	6.97	2.33
Academic	3.26	1.49
Social	3.63	1.2
Parental	3.92	1.31

Table 12: Table Of Distribution Of Sample Self-Esteem Scores (Number Of Responses)

	Very Low	Low	Inter-mediate	High	Very High	Total n. of pupils
Overall	22	27	82	77	22	230
General	8	30	78	85	29	230
Academic	36	35	44	54	61	230
Social	12	32	43	83	60	230
Parental	16	19	23	74	98	230

Table 13: Table Of Distribution Of Sample Self-Esteem Scores (Per Centages By Category)

	Very Low	Low	Intermediate	High	Very High
Overall	9.6	11.7	35.7	33.4	9.6
General	3.5	13.0	33.9	37.0	12.6
Academic	15.7	15.2	19.1	23.5	26.5
Social	5.2	13.9	18.7	36.1	26.1
Parental	7.0	8.2	10.0	32.2	42.6

The distribution tables show the percentages by category for all sub tests having substantial variances against the relevant normative distributions shown in Table 4. Taking these normative distributions as the expected frequencies, distribution fitting using chi-squared tests on the sample distributions indicated that the sample results differed from the normative distributions to a 95% level of significance in the case of general self-esteem and a 99% level of significance for the other sub-tests. Whilst these levels of significance were not surprising given the significance of the variance in the overall score, the sub-test variances were not of a uniform trend. The sample showed lower volumes of low/very low responses for social and parental self-esteem in comparison with the normative tables, but higher volumes of low/very low responses for general and academic self-esteem. Sample means for social and parental self-esteem were thus found to exceed the standardised means for these sub-tests, while the sample means for general and academic self-esteem were lower. The fact that the overall

variance was still significant to 99% despite these compensating variances in the constituent elements called for further investigation.

Social self-esteem appeared closest to the standardised model, with a sample mean of 3.63, more than 1.96 standard errors above the standardised mean and thus significant to a 95% level of confidence. 19.1% of the sample fell into the Low or Very Low categories for social self-esteem – including 5.2% in the Very Low category – against normative table rankings of 25% and 10% respectively. This would suggest that peer group relationships are regarded more positively and strongly than the norm, suggesting strong social cohesion.

Parental self-esteem also appeared stronger than the norm with a sample mean of 3.92, the variance against the standardised mean being significant to 99%. 15.2% of the sample scored as Low or Very Low for parental self-esteem, including 7.0% as Very Low, substantially below the normative table rankings of 18% and 9% respectively. A very high proportion of responses (42.6%) scored Very High, suggesting that pupils in the sample perceived their parents – or parent surrogates – to have strong positive views of them.

General self-esteem recorded a mean score of 6.97 against a standardised mean of 7.42, the adverse variance again being significant to 99%. 16.5% of the sample as Low or Very Low, including 3.5% as Very Low, against normative table rankings of 8% and 3% respectively. The normative tables

indicate a sharp downward shift in all aspects of the self-esteem measures between the primary and secondary school years, reflecting not only the onset of the turbulence of adolescence but also an increased perception of the competitiveness of the academic and social environment in which the young people are operating. With the general self-esteem sub-test examining the individual's perceptions of core personal values it is not surprising that this aspect comes under particular pressure.

The most significant factor, however, appeared to be the academic self-esteem scores of the sample as a whole. The standardised mean score for academic self-esteem was 3.48, with a standard deviation of 1.27. The sample mean for academic self-esteem emerged more than 2.58 standard errors below the standardised mean at 3.26. This variance is again significant to a 99% level of confidence. In addition a substantially higher standard deviation figure was noted (1.49) against the standardised figure. When examining distribution tables there appeared to be a very material variance against the normative table rankings, with 15.65% of the sample scoring as Very Low and a further 15.22% of the sample scoring as Low. This compares with 10% and 12% respectively in the normative tables. These findings would indicate that the sample held significantly lower perceptions of their ability to succeed academically than the norm. The implications of this in terms of their actual likely ability to succeed academically is discussed more fully in Chapter 10.2.

Hypothesis 1 has been proven in that a body of pupils does exist which exhibits significantly low self-esteem (the Vulnerable Group).

9.3 Results Of Hypothesis 2

'A significant proportion of adolescents in the Vulnerable Group will not be found on the SEN Register for emotional or behavioural difficulties.'

A comparison of the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Register as a whole (learning difficulties, physical handicap and EBD) with the list of pupils who made up the identified Vulnerable Group was made (see Table 14). The Vulnerable Group represented 21.3% of sample responses (49 out of 230 responses), against 27% of Year 7 as a whole (74 out of 274 pupils) being registered as having some category of SEN. If the SEN system had been successful in identifying emotionally vulnerable pupils one would have expected the majority of the Vulnerable Group to have been on the SEN Register and receiving support. In fact, whilst a higher proportion of the Vulnerable Group (18 out of 49 pupils - 36.7%) were so registered, the majority (63.3%) were unrecognised by the SEN system. Again gender analysis identified no significant variances in terms of SEN recognition.

Table 14: Comparison Of The SEN Register With The Vulnerable Group

Category	Total on Register	Vulnerable	Non-Vulnerable	Absent
Literacy difficulties	33	9	19	5
GLD	18	5	9	4
EBD	5	1	3	1
SpLd	13	3	7	3
PH	5	0	1	4
Total	**74**	**18**	**39**	**17**

At the time of psychometric screening the SEN Register for Year 7 as a whole included 74 pupils for learning difficulties of one sort or another. The great majority of SEN referrals can be seen to be for identified learning difficulties or other reasons such as physical handicap. Only 5 pupils were SEN-registered for emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Of these, one was absent on holiday (authorised absence) at the time of the screening, three had been referred for behavioural problems and only one for emotional difficulties. That one individual formed part of the Vulnerable Group.

Moving on then to consider the relationship between academic self-esteem and SEN registration Table 15 below sets out the breakdown of academic self-esteem scores according to vulnerability and SEN registration. It can be seen that SEN registration had not identified 24 out of the 38 (63%) of the pupils in the Vulnerable Group having low academic self-esteem, that is scores of 2 or below, leaving these pupils unsupported. Conversely, the

SEN Register did include 15 pupils from the Non-Vulnerable Group whose academic self-esteem scores were high or very high (4 to 5).

Table 15: Academic Self-Esteem Scores Analysed By SEN Registration And Vulnerability (Number Of Pupils)

	SEN Registered		Non SEN Registered		Total
Score	**Vulnerable**	**Non-Vulnerable**	**Vulnerable**	**Non-Vulnerable**	
0	3	2	3	1	9
1	5	2	13	7	27
2	6	4	8	17	35
3	4	13	4	23	44
4	0	8	3	43	54
5	0	7	0	54	61
Total	18	36	31	145	230

Hypothesis 2 is proven, in that a significant proportion of the pupils in the Vulnerable Group had not been included on the SEN Register for emotional and behavioural difficulties and so is not officially recognised as having emotional needs at a level that needed a school response.

9.4 Results Of Hypothesis 3

'The pupils in the Vulnerable Group have a significantly greater perception of an external locus of control in their lives than the Non-Vulnerable Group does.'

Assessment of Hypothesis 3 has been based on a review of the means, ranges and distribution tables of Locus of Control (see Tables 16, 17 and 18 below) analysed on three bases:

- By gender
- By vulnerability
- By gender and vulnerability

Table 16: Locus Of Control - Table Of Means

	LOC
Total Sample	16.98
All Males	16.68
All Females	17.33
All Vulnerable	19.83
All Non-vulnerable	16.20
Vulnerable Males	20.18
Vulnerable Females	19.48
Non-vulnerable Males	15.65
Non-vulnerable Females	16.80

Table 17: Locus Of Control - Table Of Ranges

	LOC
Total Sample	3 – 35
All Males	3 – 35
All Females	6 – 28
All Vulnerable	14 – 29
All Non-vulnerable	3 – 35
Vulnerable Males	16 – 29
Vulnerable Females	14 – 25
Non-vulnerable Males	3 – 35
Non-vulnerable Females	6 - 28

The possible range of scores on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale is from 0 to 40. The higher the score the more externalised the perceived locus of control in the subject's life. The review of Locus of Control scores identifies an overall sample mean of 16.98, within a range of scores between 3 and 35. Gender variance does not appear significant at this overall level, with females showing a slightly higher mean score of 17.33 against the male mean of 16.68 – indicating a slightly higher female perception of an external locus of control. Female responses tended to be grouped closer around the mean than male. A general observation across

the sample as a whole was that a greater proportion of both minimum and maximum outlying responses in all variables tended to be male responses rather than female.

There is a marked variance in mean scores between the Vulnerable and Non-Vulnerable Groups. The mean for the Non-Vulnerable Group – representing 78% of the total sample – was 16.20, below the overall sample mean, whereas the mean for the Vulnerable Group was 19.83. Here, gender differentiation did come into play, in that whilst the means for both males and females in the Vulnerable Group were higher than the respective means for the Non-Vulnerable Group, the degree of differentiation for males (20.18 – 15.65 = 4.53) was approximately 1.7 times that for females (19.48 – 16.80 = 2.68). This suggests that the Vulnerable Group as a whole view the locus of control in their lives as external to a considerably greater degree than does the Non-Vulnerable Group, and that within the Vulnerable Group it is males who have the more pronounced external LOC perception. This, it will be recalled, is the reverse of the overall gender trend in the sample as a whole. These findings tend to support Nowicki and Strickland's conclusions, referred to in Chapter 5.4.5, that a more internal locus of control is related to higher achievement in males.

To examine the significance of these trends a distribution table of locus of control scores was prepared (see Table 17).

Table 18: Locus Of Control - Distribution Table

	≥ 12	13 - 17	18 - 22	23 ≤
Total Sample	37	90	80	23
All Males	22	48	44	9
All Females	15	42	36	14
All Vulnerable	0	14	25	10
All Non-vulnerable	37	76	55	13
Vulnerable Males	0	5	18	5
Vulnerable Females	0	9	7	5
Non-vulnerable Males	22	43	26	4
Non-vulnerable Females	15	33	29	9

It can be seen that the Non-Vulnerable Group's scores start at a much lower level, and spread across a wider range of scores than the Vulnerable Group's. A two-way chi-squared test on the Vulnerable : Non-Vulnerable distribution within the sample of 230 pupils indicated a relationship statistically significant at the 1% level between vulnerability and locus of control ($\chi^2 = 23.26$; df = 3; p = 3.5717E-05).

Whilst no statistically significant relationship had been found between gender and locus of control within the overall sample ($\chi^2 = 5.09$; df = 3; p = 0.0786),

gender significance was confirmed between the Vulnerable and Non-Vulnerable Groups. A two-way chi-squared test on the 123 males using the Vulnerable : Non-Vulnerable distribution indicated a relationship statistically significant at the 1% level between vulnerability and locus of control (χ^2 = 24.39; df = 3; p = 2.0709E-05). A parallel two-way chi-squared test on the 107 females, however, indicated no statistically significant relationship between vulnerability and locus of control (χ^2 = 6.05; df = 3; p = 0.1093). Thus, even though vulnerable female responses show some increased perception of external locus of control in comparison to non-vulnerable females, the overall statistically significant relationship between vulnerability (i.e. self esteem scores) and perceived locus of control appears to be principally attributable to male responses.

Thus Hypothesis 3 is proven. The pupils in the Vulnerable Group were found to have a significantly greater perception of an external locus of control in their lives than the Non-Vulnerable Group does. However, gender significance was noted, and it was further found that the overall statistically significant relationship between vulnerability (i.e. self-esteem scores) and perceived locus of control appeared to be principally attributable to male responses.

9.5 Results Of Hypothesis 4

'The pupils in the Vulnerable Group have a significantly greater reliance on dysfunctional styles of coping with life's problems, as characterised by inadequate use of productive coping strategies or heavy reliance on non-productive coping strategies, than the Non-Vulnerable Group does.'

Subjects' coping skills were measured on three independent styles of coping;

- Their use of productive strategies such as 'work to solve the problem to the best of my ability'.
- Their reference to others to solve their problems such as 'ask a professional person to help'.
- Their use of non-productive strategies such as 'wish for a miracle'.

Consideration of the implications of the results obtained in relation to Hypothesis 4 has been based on a review of the means, ranges and distribution tables of the three identified Coping Strategy styles, analysed on three bases:

- By gender
- By vulnerability
- By gender and vulnerability

The tables involved are shown as Tables 19 to 23 below:

Table 19: Coping Strategies - Table Of Means

	Productive Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod. Coping
Total Sample	66.49	52.02	52.52
All Males	66.22	50.37	51.39
All Females	66.79	53.92	53.83
All Vulnerable	64.29	54.69	57.73
All Non-vulnerable	67.09	51.28	51.09
Vulnerable Males	62.04	50.71	54.46
Vulnerable Females	67.29	60.00	62.10
Non-vulnerable Males	67.47	50.27	50.47
Non-vulnerable Females	66.67	52.41	51.79

Table 20: Coping Strategies - Table Of Ranges

	Productive Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod. Coping
Total Sample	27 - 90	15 - 100	16 – 78
All Males	27 – 90	15 – 100	16 – 78
All Females	36 – 90	20 – 95	28 – 76
All Vulnerable	36 – 87	25 – 95	34 – 78
All Non-vulnerable	27 – 90	15 – 100	16 – 76
Vulnerable Males	36 – 87	25 – 90	34 – 78
Vulnerable Females	39 – 87	35 – 95	50 – 74
Non-vulnerable Males	27 – 90	15 – 100	16 – 74
Non-vulnerable Females	36 - 90	20 - 85	28 – 76

The review of the means and ranges of the three indicated coping strategy styles (productive, reference, non-productive) indicates two areas of possible significance:

1. Differentiation of approach between the Vulnerable and Non-Vulnerable Groups; and
2. Differing gender approaches to the various strategies.

Within a total sample of 228 responses (two pupils who had completed the self-esteem and LOC questionnaires failed to complete the coping strategies

questionnaires fully) the overall mean for ***productive coping strategies*** was calculated at 66.49 within a range of scores of 27 – 90. No overall gender differentiation was noted. The mean use of productive coping strategies by the Vulnerable Group was 64.29, against the Non-Vulnerable Group mean of 67.09. This drop however was identified solely among males in the Vulnerable Group, where the mean was 62.04. Females in the Vulnerable Group reported a mean use of productive coping strategies at 67.29 – above both the overall sample mean and above the mean recorded for non-vulnerable females.

As regards ***reference coping strategies*** it can be seen that females generally appear more ready to refer to others than males. The overall sample mean for reference coping strategies was calculated at 52.02 within a range of 15 – 100. Gender differentiation was noted, with females scoring a mean 53.29 against males 50.37. The Vulnerable Group showed a higher mean level of recourse to reference coping strategies (54.69) than the Non-Vulnerable Group (51.28). This was wholly attributable to the sharp increase in mean recourse among vulnerable females, who recorded a mean of 60.00 in comparison with non-vulnerable females at a mean of 52.41. Vulnerable males recorded only a nominal increase in mean recourse in comparison with non-vulnerable males (50.71 cf. 50.27). These findings suggest an overall reluctance on the part of males – both vulnerable and non-vulnerable - to refer problems to others, whereas females appear to be prepared to expand an already greater preparedness to refer to others when

their own self-esteem is weakened. This would appear to be a potential strength for the females.

The review of ***non-productive coping strategies*** showed an overall sample mean of 52.52, within a range of 16 – 78. Similar gender and vulnerability trends were noted for non-productive coping strategies as had been noted for reference coping strategies. Females scored a mean of 53.83 overall against males 51.39, suggesting that females adopt – or are prepared to admit to adopting – non-productive coping styles more readily than males. Pupils in the Vulnerable Group showed a markedly greater adoption of non-productive strategies than non-vulnerable pupils, with mean scores of 57.73 and 51.09 respectively. This was apparent for both males and females in the Vulnerable Group, though more pronounced for females where the mean score rose from 51.79 for non-vulnerable females to 62.10 for vulnerable females. Males showed an increase from 50.47 for the Non-Vulnerable Group to 54.46 for the Vulnerable Group.

In order to assess the significance of these trends, distribution tables were prepared, for analysis using chi-squared tests. These tables are shown at Tables 21, 22 and 23.

Table 21: Productive Coping Strategy Distribution Tables

	≤ 51	54 - 63	66 – 75	78 ≤
Total Sample	24	66	99	39
All Males	13	35	53	21
All Females	11	31	46	18
All Vulnerable	6	18	20	5
All Non-vulnerable	18	48	79	34
Vulnerable Males	5	11	10	2
Vulnerable Females	1	7	10	3
Non-vulnerable Males	8	24	43	19
Non-vulnerable Females	10	24	36	15

Table 22: Reference Coping Strategy Distribution Tables

	≥ 40	**45 - 55**	**60 – 70**	**75 ≤**
Total Sample	66	81	62	19
All Males	42	43	26	11
All Females	24	38	36	8
All Vulnerable	13	14	17	5
All Non-vulnerable	53	67	45	14
Vulnerable Males	9	9	9	1
Vulnerable Females	4	5	8	4
Non-vulnerable Males	33	34	17	10
Non-vulnerable Females	20	33	28	4

Table 23: Non-Productive Coping Strategy Distribution Tables

	≥32	34 - 42	44 - 52	54 – 62	64 ≤
Total Sample	8	35	69	73	43
All Males	6	18	42	36	20
All Females	2	17	27	37	23
All Vulnerable	0	5	10	17	17
All Non-vulnerable	8	30	59	56	26
Vulnerable Males	0	5	7	9	7
Vulnerable Females	0	0	3	8	10
Non-vulnerable Males	6	13	35	27	13
Non-vulnerable Females	2	17	24	29	13

The various tests applied to these distribution tables have confirmed the trends identified above from the analysis of means and ranges. In most cases however the results of chi-squared testing fell below the level of statistical significance at the 5% level. In the case of productive coping strategies and reference coping strategies the trends identified above all fell below the 5% level of statistical significance. In the case of non-productive coping strategies, however, a two-way chi-squared test on the Vulnerable: Non-Vulnerable distribution indicated a relationship statistically significant at the 1% level between vulnerability and non-productive coping (χ^2 = 13.71; df = 4; p = 8.2918E-03). Whilst gender differentiation across the sample as a

whole did not indicate a statistically significant relationship, a further two-way chi-squared test on the male : female distribution within the Vulnerable Group indicated a relationship statistically significant at the 1% level between gender and non-productive coping ($\chi^2 = 14.17$; df = 4; p = 6.7829E-03).

In looking at the extent to which these overall trends manifested themselves in the specific strategies adopted by individual pupils in the sample falling within the Vulnerable Group, the following results were noted:

Solving The Problem (Productive Coping Strategies)

Solving The Problem scores of 36 and below are classified in the assessment tool as 'used very little or not at all'. Six subjects (2.6 % of the total sample) fell into the category of using productive coping strategies 'very little or not at all'. That is six subjects, 2.6% of the total sample, lacked productive coping strategies at a meaningful level when faced with the inevitable problems and challenges that are part and parcel of adolescent life. Only one of these pupils was a member of the Vulnerable Group.

Non-Productive Coping Strategies

Scores of 72 or above indicated that a subject used non-productive coping strategies frequently. Eight pupils (3.4 % of the sample) scored at or above 72. Three of these eight were part of the Vulnerable Group. None of the eight pupils with frequent recourse to non-productive coping strategies appeared in the group of six pupils with limited productive coping strategies.

Limited Use Of Productive Coping Strategies And Frequent Use Of Non-Productive Coping Strategies

Thus 14 pupils had coping strategies of a type and level to cause some concern. Four of these 14 were from the Vulnerable Group and 10 were in the Non-Vulnerable Group.

Thus Hypothesis 4 was partially proven. The pupils in the Vulnerable Group were found to have a significantly greater reliance on dysfunctional styles of coping with life's problems, as characterised by heavy reliance on non-productive coping strategies, than the Non-Vulnerable Group does. This was found to be particularly true for females. No statistical significance was found, however, to suggest that the Vulnerable Group made inadequate use of productive coping strategies in comparison with the Non-Vulnerable Group.

9.6 Results Of Hypotheses 5 And 6

Hypothesis 5. 'A significant proportion of pupils in the Vulnerable Group will have, or will have older family members who have, socially and emotionally dysfunctional behaviours or experiences.'

Hypothesis 6. 'Young people whom psychometric testing identifies as socially and emotionally vulnerable will be more likely to identify themselves as troubled, unhappy with themselves, unhappy with their lives and dissatisfied with the number or nature of their friendships.'

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested together through case studies of sample groups from the Vulnerable Group and the Control Group (i.e. the Non-Vulnerable Group). The case studies were informed through the appropriate selection of assessment tools from:

- A semi-structured interview with the pupil.
- A brief questionnaire on each pupil completed by his or her Head of Year. These questionnaires asked for factual information, the Head of Year's subjective judgement and his predictions for the pupil's situation in 10 to 15 years' time.
- A review of the school's file on the pupil.
- A review of the LEA and other involved agencies files on the pupil.
- An assessment of the pupil's presentation, demeanour and responses during the semi-structured interview.

Originally five pupils from each group were selected for further investigation of their circumstances, that is ten pupils in total. Parental permission was sought to interview these ten pupils. Of the five pupils in the Vulnerable Group four of them were male and one female. The Control Group was all male. This was considered acceptable as earlier analysis had suggested that gender was not a significant factor in whether or not pupils were placed in the Vulnerable Group (see results of Hypothesis 1). Of the five pupils in the Vulnerable Group two proved unavailable for interview (see below) although information was gathered on them by other means. As the Vulnerable Group was reduced to three pupils for interview the Control Group interviews were reduced to match. Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six pupils, the Head of Year was asked to complete a brief questionnaire on ten pupils (he did not do this for the two who had left the school), the school files of the eight pupils still at school were examined and the LEA and EWS files were consulted about the two pupils who had left.

For most pupils school files are just one or two sheets of A4 paper; a front sheet with contact and related personal details followed by a brief print out of various other standard scores. Information recorded includes:

- SAT results (Standard Assessment Tests)
- CAT results (Cognitive Ability Tests)
- the past year's attendance figures

All pupils are screened on the CAT tests when they enter the school in Year 7. Their results are recorded in the form of the predicted likelihood of the

pupil gaining 5 A to C results in their GCSEs in Year 11. The pupils are assigned to ability sets in different subjects on the basis of these predictions.

The results of Hypotheses 5 and 6 will be considered together in the form of ten short case studies. Each study will include the findings of the pupil interviews, Head of Year questionnaires, review of the pupil files and both the subjects' responses and demeanour during the interviews; assessing the qualitative and experiential accounts they reveal.

At the end of the case studies data has been extracted from these studies and combined for display in a table and statistical analysis (Table 34).

9.6.1 The Vulnerable Group (Studies 1 to 5)

Case Study: Pupil 1

Table 24: Case Study 1's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	8	Very low
Locus of Control	21	Above mean for vulnerable males
Productive Coping	45	Low – >1SD below mean for vulnerable males
Reference Coping	35	Low – circa 1SD below mean for vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	54	Mean level for vulnerable males

Pupil 1 (male) had moved out of the area roughly a month before the interviews were scheduled to take place. When enquiries were made through the Pupils Section at the LEA he had not yet registered at another school. The boy had come to the Secondary school without any record of problems and not had an SEN file for most of Year 7. It was established through discussion with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) that by the time he left his attendance had reached the trigger level for Educational Welfare Service (EWS) involvement and so his entry at Stage 3 on the SEN Register. The EWS had started to investigate his unauthorised absences but at the time of closing his file, due to his move out of the area, they had not found discussion with his mother very productive. They had a

record of several cancelled appointments for home visits and one that had been made but when the EWO called she had found no one at home. Only one initial contact visit had actually been made out of a recorded attempt at six.

Pupil 1 had four previous addresses on his file, all within the LEA area. He had attended three Primary schools and, to date, one Secondary school. Professionals working with the children in this area sometimes refer, informally, to 'carousel' children. This term reflects the high number of children who move around between the several large estates of Council houses and sometimes privately rented housing in the area, many in the same LEA and some over the boundary in neighbouring Authorities, frequently returning to the same streets and schools several times. Teachers, Social Workers, Education Welfare Officers and Educational Psychologists find they pick up the same child's file several times over the years. These moves are often, apparently, unplanned and 'spur of the moment'. They are accounted for by a number of often inter-related factors. Refurbishment and re-decoration grants at the time of Council house exchanges, arrears in rent, debts to unofficial debt collectors, Social Service investigations into domestic circumstances, relationship changes and feuds with neighbours all act as inducements to move.

It is not known why Pupil 1 and his family moved out of the area without notice to the school nor why he had not enrolled in a new school after one month.

Pupil 1 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 1 had a recently identified school attendance problem but it is not known whether this was a continuation of a longer-standing problem that had recently been identified or whether his school attendance had really altered dramatically during Year 7. As the transition year between Primary and Secondary school many pupils find Year 7 quite traumatic. Sometimes this settles down and sometimes it is the start of longer-term difficulties. The experience of the EWS in trying to gain Pupil 1's mother's co-operation to address his attendance problem suggested that his mother condoned, or at least tolerated his absences. The family's failure to inform the school of their move or to register with a new school after a month also suggested that education did not have a very high priority in the family's life. On this basis it is concluded that the balance of probability indicates that Pupil 1 came from a family that was socially dysfunctional in twenty-first century U.K. culture and society and therefore that his case supported Hypothesis 5. Without direct contact with Pupil 1 or his family it is not possible to say with absolute certainty whether or not this was the case. There remains the possibility that the family had been a functional one and some particular trauma or life event had overtaken them of which Pupil1's absenteeism from school was a direct and functional response.

Hypothesis 6 could not be tested on Pupil 1.

Case Study: Pupil 2

Table 25: Case Study 2's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	7	Very low
Locus of Control	29	Very high - >2SD above mean for vulnerable males
Productive Coping	42	Low - >1SD below mean for vulnerable males
Reference Coping	40	Mean to low for vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	42	Low - >1SD below mean for vulnerable males

Pupil 2 was not available for interview having been permanently excluded for a serious assault on a member of staff and a lesser assault on a pupil. Although he still lived in the area and was awaiting allocation to another local secondary school it was not thought appropriate to interview him in the light of the traumatic times he and his family were likely to be going through. His LEA files revealed that one of the outcomes of the meeting held to discuss the boy's situation and his impending permanent exclusion was that a referral should be made to the Child and Family Mental Health Unit. This is a Health Service provision. The grounds for this referral were not known and without the parents' permission access to his Health records could not be sought.

Pupil 2 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Once again circumstantial evidence suggested that Pupil 2 exhibited socially and emotionally dysfunctional behaviours and had had socially and emotionally dysfunctional experiences. There was no opportunity to corroborate the impression gained through this recorded evidence but the balance of probability lies with Case Study 2 supporting Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 could not be tested on Pupil 2.

Case Study: Pupil 3

Table 26: Case Study 3's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	5	Very low
Locus of Control	16	Low - circa 1SD below mean for vulnerable females
Productive Coping	57	1 SD below mean for vulnerable females
Reference Coping	65	Above mean for vulnerable females
Non-productive coping	· 68	High – circa 1SD above mean for vulnerable females

School File

Pupil 3 had not been on the SEN Register at the start of Year 7, nor when the initial survey of pupils was conducted for this study, but her school file was quite thick. She had quite a complicated medical situation, having been born with external digestive organs. For much of her earlier life this pupil had had problems controlling her bowels and as a result had worn nappies until she was about 6 years old. Parental letters in the file requested that she be allowed to leave the classroom without notice. The last recorded incidence of incontinence in school was from Year 5, the penultimate year at Junior school. Pupil 3's Head of Year did not mention her past difficulties in this area and so it is thought that her present school staff either did not know

of them or considered them to be a thing of the past. It is thought that Pupil 3 does not have any residual physical difficulties in this area now. Pupil 3 was in receipt of free school meals. Her attendance was 97% and over the past year she had been recorded as arriving late on 2% of the register. This represents good attendance and punctuality.

By March of Year 7 Pupil 3 was on Stage 2 of the SEN Register. Stage 2 was the stage of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) that identified a pupil as having needs that require action at school level to support. External help is not considered appropriate at this stage. This stage no longer exists under the revised Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001)

Pupil 3 was on the register for 'silly and immature behaviour' and 'an inability to get on with her peers'. Interventions that had been tried included a Behaviour Report, a Home-School agreement and time in the Referral Unit.

Key phrases from her file and copies of the Behavioural Report that she had been on included:

Squabbling, name calling, very immature, teasing, can not share, does not listen to the ideas of others, selfish, demanding, no equipment in lessons, inadequate work, attention wanders in class, disruptive in lessons after 10 minutes on-task ability, finds co-operating with other pupils hard, stamps feet, sulks, insolent, cries, busy-body, aggressive in speech and manner to

others, loud, awkward, answers back, veers from attention seeking compliance to temper tantrums.

Her CAT results predicted a 9% probability of Pupil 3 achieving 5 A-Cs in her GCSEs. On the basis of these CAT results and her classroom performance she had been assigned to the lowest sets for all subjects where pupils were put in sets.

<u>Head Of Year's Assessment</u>

Pupil 3's Head of Year had said that she was not on the SEN Register and so presumably he did not know that she was. This is surprising as the usual procedure for entering pupils onto the SEN Register is that one or more subject teacher raises their concerns with the Head of Year. The Head of Year will co-ordinate some investigation into the extent of the pupil's difficulties and then discuss the situation with the SENCo. The SENCo enters the pupil's name on the register following a meeting between the various staff with involvement in the pupil's support. Even under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) parents should have been invited to that meeting. The new Code lays even more emphasis on the parents' and the child's involvement in their SEN support. In practice parents are often informed of the outcome by letter.

Pupil 3's Head of Year had rated her at 3.5 on a 5 point scale of happiness (0 = extremely unhappy and 5 = extremely happy). He had identified her as popular, friendly, confident and volatile and predicted an unstable manual

employment future for her, possibly in catering. He suggested that her domestic arrangements might well be erratic and unstable, as her mother's currently were, and that alcohol might feature highly in her life. He did not give details about either her mother's situation or his predictions for Pupil 3. Pupil 3's mother was said to have maintained inconsistent contact with the school in support of her daughter, attending some meetings and presenting as very caring and concerned when she was there but then failing to respond to invitations to others.

One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview

Pupil 3 presented as a very friendly, open and out-going girl. She chatted freely about all sorts of topics as soon as she entered the room and seemed to have few inhibitions about being called to talk to a woman she did not know in her Head of Year's Office.

Pupil 3 was tall for her age and had long ginger hair. This meant that she was likely to be quite physically conspicuous among her peers. In contravention of the school dress code she was wearing her shirt outside her trousers and her tie was knotted loosely with the long thin end tucked out of sight and only about 10 – 15 centimetres of the fat end protruding below the knot. She had painted some flowers, hearts and butterflies on her arms and cheeks with felt pens. She had attempted to remove the ones on her cheeks but they were still visible as an indistinct smudge of colours. I did not comment on these bodily decorations but Pupil 3 volunteered the information that her friend had made her do them and now she was going to 'get done'.

She appeared fairly distressed and angry about this for the few seconds she was talking about it but as soon as she had expressed her point she went on to another subject and her distress seemed to vanish.

Pupil 3 spoke with a fairly restricted vocabulary in a manner and on subjects that suggested a child younger than her 11 years. She skipped from subject to subject. As we worked through the interview Pupil 3 mostly answered each question briefly but then used it to launch into a range of other subjects. She needed to be brought back on track for each new question.

Pupil 3 lived with her mother, two younger brothers and step-father. She claimed to love all four of her family members 'lots' although she said she 'answered back at home and had fights with her brothers.' She had no contact with and did not remember her natural father who had lived with the family until she was three years old. On the Likert scale she put herself at 4/5 for happiness at school and 5 for happiness at home (5 = extremely happy). When asked about what she enjoyed she said, 'PE, PSE, English and Science because they keep you fit and healthy.' When asked about what she did not like at school she said "being picked on" and "being legged over" by other people for no reason. She reported that she had only been in minor trouble at school, usually for talking too much, and never been in real trouble out of school. She mentioned a fight she had had 'ages ago' with another girl. She claimed it was nothing much and their parents sorted out the problem. In fact it is believed from other sources that Pupil 3 received a police caution after that incident.

Pupil 3 was asked several times and in different ways about any behavioural problems she might have had, although she was not directly challenged with the knowledge that she had been on Behavioural Report, had a spell in the Referral Unit or seen the police. It was thought that she had either genuinely forgotten these incidents or else did not recognise them as relating to perceived bad behaviour.

Pupil 3 reported that she took part in a wide range of sporting activities, sometimes with her mother and sometimes with her friends. She claimed to have a great many friends but that 'some of them were nasty to her'. When asked about this she said that she 'didn't care'. She reported that she 'shouted at them too.'

Pupil 3's ambition was to live in a house in the centre of her present home town with her friends and to be a hairdresser. When asked what three wishes she would make to change anything about her self or life she chose:

1. To make me and my brothers get on well
2. To make me stop answering back to mum
3. To stop being nasty to my friends and swearing at them

Pupil 3 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 3 exhibited a strong degree of socially and emotionally dysfunctional behaviour. She lacked the emotional maturity or control to understand or take ownership of her behaviour or its consequences and was strongly

focussed on the possibility of other people deliberately causing her difficulties as the root of many of her problems. This can be seen reflected in the conflicts between her responses to the various questionnaires. Her below average Locus of Control score suggests a relatively strong perception of an internal locus of control, which contrasts with a relatively high level of recourse to coping strategies involving reference to others. Above average recourse to non-productive coping strategies, a significantly lower level of use of productive coping strategies and very low self esteem suggest that Pupil 3 sees herself unable to meet the expectations of self-reliance – whether her own or of others - in coping with life. There was a suggestion of dysfunctional behaviour in her family from her Head of Year although this was not picked up from her responses at interview other than in her reference to how she got on with her mother and brothers. The fights and arguments she had with her mother and brothers could have reflected her immature and dysfunctional social skills rather than any actual dysfunction within the family unit as a whole. At 11 years old Pupil 3 was thought to have already had some dealings with the police.

Hypothesis 5 is supported by this case study.

Pupil 3 claimed to be happy and to have a great many friends. Reports of her activities and her Head of Year's report suggested that this was true although school records of problems with her social relationships might be seen as contradicting this. Her friendships appeared to be volatile, erratic and frequently to cause Pupil 3 problems. Despite this they remain

friendships and she claimed to be happy with them. It could be argued that Pupil 3 lacked the understanding to see or describe her friendships as unsatisfactory. Although Pupil 3's self-report means that Hypothesis 6 can not be said to be proved through her case study it is the contention of this research that it does lend some support to it.

Case Study: Pupil 4

Table 27: Case Study 4's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	5	Very low
Locus of Control	22	Above mean for vulnerable males
Productive Coping	60	Below mean for vulnerable males
Reference Coping	35	Low - circa 1SD below mean for vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	52	Below mean for vulnerable males

School File

Pupil 4's school file recorded his attendance at 98% with 2 authorised absences and 4 late marks. He was given a 57% probability of 5 A-Cs at GCSE. There was nothing else of significance in his school file.

Head of Year Assessment

The written questionnaire completed by the Head of Year described Pupil 4 as of broadly average ability and an excellent worker. On the 5-point scale of happiness his Head of Year rated him as very happy (4) and chose popular, well-integrated, friendly and confident as appropriate adjectives to describe him. His marital and employment future was predicted as married and holding a professional position. He was thought likely to achieve more

than some pupils with his educational ability because of his hard work and focussed approach. His parents were described as very supportive.

In handing over this questionnaire the Head of Year commented as an aside that he considered this pupil to be somewhat 'spoiled', over-indulged and over-protected by his parents.

One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview

In the one-to-one interview Pupil 4 presented as a very pleasant lad; confident, straightforward and articulate. He spoke warmly and proudly of his family and exuded a sense of security in relation to his place in it.

Pupil 4 described himself as very happy at school (4) and extremely happy (5) at home. He was an only child and until 1998 had lived in the officers' quarters on an RAF base in the south of England. In 1998 his father left the RAF and the family moved to his present home. Pupil 4 implied that this involved some slight loss of status, security and financial position for the family. He mentioned the presence of 'thugs' in his present neighbourhood on several occasions. It is thought likely that he now lived in a more diverse social mix than he would have done on a secure and guarded Air Base. His father had had some initial difficulty in finding employment when he left the RAF but now worked in an IT company. His mother was the manager of a large department store. Apart from the slight recognition of less salubrious surroundings for the family, a situation he appeared to view stoically, Pupil 4

did not reveal any significantly dysfunctional or disturbing emotions, attitudes or behaviours in relation to his family and social situation.

Pupil 4 reported that he had continued to see his old friends for some time after the move but that had reduced to Christmas card exchange now. He had made good friends in his present school, was extremely happy there and had never been in trouble. He was in the top sets for everything except maths which he was in the second set for.

Pupil 4's ambition for ten years time was to have graduated from University and to be living in a house in a 'good' area, that is 'without thugs', either living alone or with his friends. He had not really thought about a career but would quite like to work either as a footballer or with computers.

When asked what three wishes he would make to change anything about himself or his life he chose:

1. To belong to a better football club
2. To move to a bigger house with his family
3. To go abroad on holiday with his family

Pupil 4 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

This case study did not support either Hypothesis 5 or 6. Nothing learned from Pupil 4's files, Head of Year questionnaire or the one-to-one interview suggested that he or his family had socially or emotionally dysfunctional behaviours or experiences. Apart from the Self-Esteem assessment the only

suggestion of difficulties came from the comments his Head of Year made about this boy being spoiled and over-protected. Although his scores on the Self-Esteem inventory conducted at the beginning of Year 7 showed him to have very low self-esteem there was no evidence of this from the case study conducted towards the end of Year 7.

Reference to Pupil 4s Self-Esteem questionnaire showed that this pupil had claimed, when given the chance to respond anonymously at the start of Year 7, to:

- wish he were younger
- give up easily when things are hard
- have few friends
- believe that his parents made him feel not good enough
- fail at important things
- feel ashamed of himself
- feel no good at all
- believe that most girls and boys were more intelligent than him
- frequently think about running away from home
- worry a lot

With a self-esteem score of 5, pupil 4s self-esteem was among the lowest score even within the vulnerable group. This makes the apparent discrepancy between the evidence of this self-esteem assessment and the evidence of the interviews and school reports all the more perplexing.

Three possible explanations for this apparent discrepancy are:

1. That there were temporary factors at work at the time of the Self-Esteem assessment. The Self-Esteem inventory was conducted close to the start of the academic year and Pupil 4 might have experienced self-doubts and difficulties relating to the transition from Primary school at that time. These factors might have resolved themselves by the time of the follow-up work.

2. Pupil 4's low self-esteem might result from difficulties of a nature that would only be accessible through more sensitive assessment methods than were employed at this time. Further investigation into Pupil 4's reactions to his house move might have proved profitable.

3. Pupil 4 might have been prepared to reveal different information in the privacy and safety of an anonymous questionnaire than in a face-to-face interview or in his inter-actions with others at school. Once again a more sensitive and detailed assessment would be needed to explore this possibility.

The possibility of either transient or hidden difficulties can not be explored and so according to the criteria set for this research Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Pupil 4 identified himself as happy with himself and his life and had satisfactory friendships. Hypothesis 6 was therefore not supported by this case study.

Case Study: Pupil 5

Table 28: Case Study 5's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	5	Very low
Locus of Control	27	Very high – circa 2SD above mean for vulnerable males
Productive Coping	72	High – circa 1SD above mean for vulnerable males
Reference Coping	65	High – circa 1SD above mean for vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	58	Above mean for vulnerable males

<u>School File</u>

Pupil 5's school file recorded his attendance at 96% with no unauthorised absences or late marks. He was given an 80% probability of 5 A-Cs at GCSE. There was nothing else of significance in his school file.

<u>Head of Year Assessment</u>

Pupil 5 was described as a 'brightish' boy, capable of a professional future but who might not achieve it due to temperamental reasons. This opinion was not expanded upon. On the 5 point scale of happiness his Head of Year rated him as very happy (4) and chose 'popular', 'friendly' and 'confident' as appropriate adjectives to describe him. His social and employment situation

in ten to fifteen years time was predicted as unstable, co-habiting with some alcohol use and occasional alcohol mis-use. His parents were said not to respond to school letters, attend parents' evenings or to act in a noticeably supportive manner.

One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview

Pupil 5 presented as a very diffident and apprehensive boy, overly aware of the impression he was making. He sat on the edge of his seat and started the interview politely but with a defensive/aggressive wariness. He needed a great deal of reassurance that the interview was not being held because he was 'in trouble'. He asked frequently who else had been interviewed. When he was told that all the interviews were confidential and I could not give the names of other pupils I had seen he then volunteered the names of several boys and asked if they had been seen. Several of the names he gave were recognised as the names of older boys acknowledged as having severe behavioural problems.

The responses given by Pupil 5 were thought to have been chosen carefully by him with a view to the impression they would make and to giving the 'right' answers to questions rather than necessarily his true opinions. He reported that he was happy at school because school was 'good for learning and if you want to get a good job'. He said he rarely had homework to do because he was a quick worker and always finished his work in class. When asked about his behaviour at school he used phrases to describe his situation that sounded as though they were repeated from comments made

by adults, including a police officer in what sounded like a Police Caution. For example he described himself as 'easily led and distracted'. He said that he was 'not a bad lad' but had got into 'bad company' and had let other pupils 'upset him and wind him up'. He was keen to explain that he was better behaved now than formerly and was unlikely to come up against the law in the future. It was thought that he had experienced some difficulties in social relationships with his peers, difficulties that he ascribed to the poor behaviour of others and his association with poorly behaved boys rather than as his direct responsibility. Many of Pupil 5's responses were thought to be a reflection of the comments, aspirations and opinions of adults or the responses he thought I would want to hear rather than the genuinely held opinions and values of an 11 year old boy.

When Pupil 5 was asked about his friends he said that he did not have best friends but was friendly with most people except those in the 'gooney group'. When asked what this meant he replied 'the thickos. My mum says I'm not to be friends with them'. He could not name one particular friend or one friend who had been to his house or whose house he had been to. When asked who he would invite to his house if he could he named a boy in Year 6 of his local Primary school. He said he would like to be his friend but had not seen him since he left Primary school. Some time later when we had gone on to another topic Pupil 5 returned to this question and asked if I would write down another name. It was the name of a boy from the Year above his and Pupil 5 said that this boy had just been voted onto the school Council. He thought that this boy could be a good friend.

Out of school Pupil 5's leisure activities included looking at pictures of people doing karate and pictures of aeroplanes, going to RAF cadets, using the internet and playing alien games on his computer. He could not say where the RAF cadets met or what they did and he said that he had not attended for some months. When asked what he used the internet for he replied 'learning things'. These activities are predominantly solitary. He carried out all but the RAF cadets in his bedroom alone. When asked if he went out Pupil 5 replied that he did not like going out because everyone was on drugs and drunk all the time. He did not want to get into trouble. On occasions he played football with his 7 year old cousin. Pupil 5's ambition for the future was to live in a flat on his own in his present town and to be an airline pilot.

It was thought that Pupil 5 had only a very loose concept of the conventional meaning of friends and friendship. He was also thought to be rather lonely.

Pupil 5's most interesting and revealing responses came when he was asked about his family. His air of defensiveness and unease increased markedly when discussing his family. He put his happiness at home at point 5 (extremely happy) but said this in a rather belligerent and challenging manner. He added that this was because he had a lock on his bedroom door and could keep out of everyone's way. He said he would 'get' anyone who tried to come in. He said he was happy when he was in his bedroom with the door locked.

Pupil 5 felt that he got on best with his older sister because she 'stuck up for him' and said that he could go and live with her when she had a place of her own. His older sister and mother were always arguing and fighting. He said that he fell out with his mother frequently and that at such times she told him that she was 'under the doctor' because of the stress he caused her. She told him that she 'had to put up with everything' and she took tablets to help her with this.

Pupil 5 reported that he lived with his mother, step-father of 4 years and his older and younger sister. He asked me to record that he had called his step-father 'dad' because that was what he was meant to call him. His older sister was going to 'be able to get out soon' as she was joining the army. Prior to the current arrangement he said he had lived in a nuclear family of birth mother and birth father and two full sisters. Currently he and his sisters had regular visits to their birth father. He stressed that everyone was very happy with the arrangements. When he described this set-up he was obviously on edge and not telling the truth. He was asked gently if there was anyone else in his family or who he would like to talk about and with very little encouragement, reaffirmed that the interview was confidential and then said he had been told to describe his family like that. He said that he and his siblings had been told they would be thrown out of their home if they did not tell that version.

Pupil 5 said that there was a girl in his Primary school who used to tell him that she was his step-sister. He did not believe her and his mother had told

him that she must be stupid. Additionally to this his older sister used to say that she hated their father and that she knew a secret about him. Last year, concerned about inconsistencies in his family story, Pupil 5 had asked his mother if their father had left them for a while between his and his younger sister's birth and had another family. His mother had been very angry and hit him but eventually she told him that the man he thought of as his and his sisters' father was only father to his younger sister. He and his older sister had two different fathers but his mother was not sure who they were. The man he had thought of as his father had joined the family when Pupil 5 was quite young. He could not remember this but his older sister could. She had been intimidated into keeping quiet about it.

It was apparent that Pupil 5's family had been living quite a complicated lie for some time and had held the story together through fear and threats. Pupil 5's mother and the two father figures he had known had gone to elaborate lengths to maintain a veneer of what they presumably saw as socially acceptable respectability. This must have resulted in a lot of internal conflicts and pressures within the family.

Pupil 5 reported that his current 'father' worked for a railway company in 'an important job'. Sometimes he had to wear a tie to work. His mother was a school cleaner and dinner lady but Pupil 5 was very keen to add that she had had an interview at a large department store and could have worked there had she wanted. There had been some mix up at the interview that resulted in her not taking up the job. Pupil 5 was obviously very aware of

status through employment and had absorbed the idea that his parents' occupations might be found wanting and needed explaining or excusing.

When asked what three wishes he would make to change anything about himself or his life Pupil 5 wished for:

1. a job as an airline pilot now so that he could leave home.
2. his parents to be able to afford a house in Goathland and to be happy when they got it.
3. a place at a private school so that he could get a good education. His mother had told him that you are called a 'boff' if you work at his present school, but if you don't work you are put in detention.

When the interview was over Pupil 5 appeared quite nervous about how much he had said. He was also exaggeratedly keen to be seen as helpful, responsible and mature. He offered to collect the next interviewee for me or to get me a drink from the staff room. When these offers were declined he asked if he could tidy the room for me in preparation for the next pupil or wait until I had finished so that he could help to carry my papers to my car. Later that morning I passed Pupil 5 in the school corridor. He looked away and acted as though he did not recognise me.

Pupil 5 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 5 appeared to be living with a great deal of emotional pressure and internal conflict. He was trying to resolve several conflicting value sets and cultural 'truths'. At home he had had inculcated into him a belief in the need

to be seen as 'respectable' and 'successful'. This version of respectable and successful involved conforming to a fairly narrow social norm and believing in a fairly structured and authoritarian social hierarchy. Pupil 5 had been told to live a life in which conformity and deference to a received version of societal hierarchy were paramount. This aspirational world was in strong conflict with the actual life he saw modelled at home. His mother had three children by different partners (two unknown) and her employment status was, according to the family view of things, demeaning and a source of shame. The conflict between these two systems was resolved by keeping up an elaborate masquerade for the world and denying the inconsistencies.

In school Pupil 5 ran up against yet another value system conflict. He was obviously fascinated by the further extremes of the 'lad culture' that he saw at school. He greatly exaggerated this end of the adolescent cultural continuum and believed that the vast majority of 11 year old boys lived lives on the edge of the law and social norms; drinking, drug taking, involved in petty crime and sexual activity. He was both attracted and repelled by this rough and disrespectful culture. As a loner from an emotionally intense and unstable family background he had little frame of reference through friends or a secure personal identity and so could not see this culture in proportion. The excitement he saw in the behaviour of these boys was in conflict with his fear of it and further complicated by the knowledge that he would never be accepted by them, or them by his parents. He felt very much on the outside.

Pupil 5's family style was thought to have inhibited him from developing a secure personal identity or sense of his own value system. He was dysfunctionally dependent on the opinions and attitudes of others. He had few friends and was extremely dissatisfied with his social relationships.

This case study supports both Hypotheses 5 and 6.

9.6.2 The Control Group (Studies 6 to 10)

The five pupils in the Control Group were chosen from the population with functional levels of self-esteem.

Case Study: Pupil 6

Table 29: Case Study 6's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	25	Very High
Locus of Control	16	Circa mean for non-vulnerable males
Productive Coping	72	Above mean for non-vulnerable males
Reference Coping	50	Circa mean for non-vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	40	Low – approaching 1SD below mean for non-vulnerable males

<u>School File</u>

Pupil 6's attendance was 88% with no late marks or unauthorised absences. He was predicted as having a 59% probability of gaining 5 A to C grades at GCSE.

<u>Head of Year Assessment</u>

Pupil 6 was described as of broadly average ability. His Head of Year expected him to achieve more in his GCSEs than was predicted by his CAT scores. On the 5 point scale of happiness his Head of Year rated him as very happy (4) and chose 'popular', 'well-integrated', 'friendly' and 'confident' as appropriate adjectives to describe him. His marital and employment future was predicted as married, stable and probably holding a professional position. His family was described as supportive.

<u>One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview</u>

Pupil 6 presented as an articulate, pleasant, confident and intelligent young man. His responses suggested that he was happy and secure in his identity and in his place in his family. He showed some interest in the research that his interview was to form a part of.

Pupil 6 rated himself as very happy (4) at school and extremely happy (5) at home. He lived with his birth parents and his one brother, who was two years younger than he was. His family profile was, and had always been, very stable and he quickly dismissed any questions about dysfunctional lifestyles in a way that reflected an assumption that they must not really be serious suggestions. He was in the top sets for all subjects and felt he coped well with his school work although sometimes he found his English work a little hard. He had never been in any kind of trouble at school apart from having to stay behind to finish some work on one occasion.

Pupil 6 reported that he had many friends, mostly boys he had been friends with for many years and some new friends he had made since he came to his present school. Some were friends in specific circumstances, such as clubs he belonged to. Out of school he played football, went bowling and to the cinema with his friends. He had a girlfriend whom he saw twice a week and whom he had met at a friend's house about three months ago.

Pupil 6's ambition for 10 to 15 years time was to be either a doctor or a physiotherapist attached to a sporting organisation, preferably a football club. His fantasy job would be to be a professional footballer but he realised that that was unlikely. His present girlfriend was also interested in medicine as a career and he thought it would be nice if they could live together in a house in their present town.

Pupil 6 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 6 was a member of the Control Group and so came from the population that had functional levels of self-esteem.

On the basis of the above case study Pupil 6 was a well-integrated and functional member of the school community. Nothing dysfunctional was observed in his family background and he had productive social relationships.

This case study supports Hypotheses 5 and 6.

Case Study: Pupil 7

Table 30: Case Study 7's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	25	Very High
Locus of Control	15	Circa mean for non-vulnerable males
Productive Coping	81	High - >1SD above mean for non-vulnerable males
Reference Coping	35	Low – approaching 1SD below mean for non-vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	36	Low - >1SD below mean for non-vulnerable males

School File

Pupil 7's attendance was 95% with no late marks or unauthorised absences. He was predicted as having a 66% probability of gaining 5 A to C grades at GCSE.

Head of Year Assessment

Pupil 7 was seen as averagely happy (3). His Head of Year described him as popular and friendly within his group but felt that he had over-protective parents who spoiled him and inhibited his social maturation. His marital and employment future was predicted as married, stable and probably holding a

professional position. His parents were described as frequently in contact with the school and supportive of their son's education and development.

One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview

Pupil 7 presented as a friendly, open and polite boy if a little nervous at first. He was slightly overweight and had a physically 'disorganised' look that was suggestive of a dyspraxic tendency. His shoes were unfastened, his shirt twisted around his fairly large waist and his over stuffed and open school bag was quite an encumbrance to him as he walked across the room and sat down. His open and straightforward manner was suggestive of a slightly younger boy than his 11 years.

Pupil 7 rated himself as very happy at school and at home. He was an only child living with his birth parents in the house he was born in. He giggled slightly when asked about the range of dysfunctional behaviours that formed part of the interview, such as whether he or others in his family had ever been in trouble with the police or used alcohol or other drugs. He clearly thought that such questions were rather a joke and that it was perhaps a bit 'naughty' to even consider them.

Pupil 7 had several friends and one best friend whom he spent most of his time with both at school and out of school. He liked playing dodge ball in the field near his house when the weather was fine and otherwise he played on his friend's computer. Pupil 7 had not given much thought to his future but in

10 to 15 years time he hoped to have an office job and to live on his own in a flat somewhere, possibly his home town.

Pupil 7 had some difficulty in thinking of three things that he would like to change about himself or his life. After some thought he said he would like to be:

1. Richer
2. Stronger
3. More intelligent

It is not thought that he felt very strongly about these three wishes.

Pupil 7 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 7 was a member of the Control Group and so came from the population that had functional levels of self-esteem.

On the basis of the above case study Pupil 7 was thought to be slightly immature physically, and perhaps emotionally, for his age. The range of 'normal' maturation for Year 7 pupils is very wide and Pupil 7 was believed to fall well within it. He was not thought to have a dysfunctional social or emotional profile. He appeared to be satisfied with his life and to have productive social relationships.

This case study supports Hypotheses 5 and 6.

Case Study: Pupil 8

Table 31: Case Study 8's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	25	Very High
Locus of Control	3	Very Low – lowest within sample
Productive Coping	87	Very High – approaching 2SD above mean for non-vulnerable males
Reference Coping	40	Below mean for non-vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	36	Low - >1SD below mean for non-vulnerable males

School File

Pupil 8's attendance was recorded as 97% with no late marks or unauthorised absences. He was predicted as having a 86% probability of gaining 5 A to C grades at GCSE.

Head of Year Assessment

Pupil 8 was seen as extremely happy (4.9). His Head of Year described him as popular, friendly, well integrated and confident. His marital and employment future was predicted as married, stable and holding a professional position. His parents were described as supportive of their son's education and development.

<u>One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview</u>

Pupil 8 presented as a mature and confident young man. He appeared slightly older than his 12 years. He was tall, athletic looking and with the suggestion of facial hair. He seemed at ease with himself.

Pupil 8 rated his happiness at home and at school at point 4, very happy. He lived with his birth parents and had an older sister in the same school and a brother at university. He reported no evidence of socially or emotionally dysfunctional behaviour in his family background.

Pupil 8 said he enjoyed his school work and looked forward to a career in computers or medicine. He hoped he could combine the two and talked about the possibility of medical research.

Pupil 8 played cricket for the school and said his parents had been concerned that it might take time away from his studies. So far he felt that he coped with the time management needed for sport practise as well as his school work. Most of Pupil 8's friends were also in the cricket team except for his best friend who was a close neighbour and fellow computer enthusiast.

Pupil 8's three wishes were:

1. To win his next cricket match
2. To win the match after that
3. To win the match after that

His relaxed smile as he gave these three wishes suggested that he was aware of the frivolity of them. He offered them in the absence of any more substantive wishes.

Pupil 8 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupil 8 was a member of the Control Group and so came from the population that had functional levels of self-esteem.

On the basis of the above case study Pupil 8 was judged to be a mature and confident young man with healthy emotional and social behaviours, satisfied with his life and with productive social relationships.

This case study supports Hypotheses 5 and 6.

Case Studies: Pupils 9 and 10

Table 32: Case Study 9's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	20	High
Locus of Control	18	Above mean for non-vulnerable males
Productive Coping	69	Above mean for non-vulnerable males
Reference Coping	35	Low – approaching 1SD below mean for non-vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	54	Above mean for non-vulnerable males

Table 33: Case Study 10's Psychometric Test Scores

Aspect tested	Score	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	21	High
Locus of Control	13	Below mean for non-vulnerable males
Productive Coping	78	High – circa 1SD above mean for non-vulnerable males
Reference Coping	55	Above mean for non-vulnerable males
Non-productive coping	46	Below mean for non-vulnerable males

School File

The school files for Pupils 9 and 10 contained only the front sheets which showed attendance rates in the high 90s, no late marks and predicted a 88% and 87% probability of five A to C marks in their GCSEs.

Head of Year Assessment

The teacher assessment sheets that their Head of Year filled in on these two pupils were identical. Both boys were seen as happy, confident and popular high achievers heading for professional careers and stable married lives. Both boys were said to live in stable and happy families that supported them well in their education and social development.

One-To-One Semi-Structured Interview

No interviews were conducted with these two pupils. Only three members of the Vulnerable Group had been interviewed and so only three Control interviews were necessary to achieve a balance between the two groups.

Pupils 9 And 10 And Hypotheses 5 and 6

Pupils 9 and 10 were members of the Control Group and so came from the population that had functional levels of self-esteem.

On the basis of the school files and Head of Year assessments Pupils 9 and 10 did not exhibit dysfunctional social or emotional behaviours and had productive social relationships.

These two case studies support Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 6 could not be tested on Pupils 9 and 10.

9.6.3 Summary Of Case Studies

Table 34: Summary Of Case Studies' Support For Hypotheses 5 And 6

	No. Of Case Studies Supporting Hypotheses 5 And 6			
	Vulnerable Group	**Control Group**	**Total No. Supporting Case Studies**	**No. of Case Studies Used**
Hypothesis 5	4	5	9	10
Hypothesis 6	1	3	4	6

Hypothesis 5; A significant proportion of pupils in the Vulnerable Group will have, or will have older family members who have, socially and emotionally dysfunctional behaviours or experiences. This was supported by 9 out of 10 case studies. Pupil 4 remained the only anomaly in that he had measured as having significantly low self-esteem but appeared to remain functional and well integrated into his community.

Hypothesis 6; Young people whom psychometric testing identifies as socially and emotionally vulnerable will be more likely to identify themselves as troubled, unhappy with themselves, unhappy with their lives and dissatisfied with the number or nature of their friendships; involved the subjects' subjective report. This was assessed through the 6 semi-structured interviews rather than from external sources. Four out of the six case studies supported the hypothesis. The Case Study on Pupil 4 did not.

Pupil 3 had volatile and insecure personal relationships. Her entry in the SEN register cited 'an inability to get on with her peers' and the description of her in her school file (finds co-operation with others hard, teases, can not share, selfish, demanding, sulks, aggressive to others) suggests that she was seen by others as having difficulties with personal happiness, social relationships and friendships. Although she claimed to have a great many friends it was possible that this claim reflected her limited understanding of her own feelings and situation and inability to articulate what understanding she had. Pupil 3 claimed her friends were 'nasty to her' and that she shouted at them and was nasty to them. She also identified these friends as the cause of her social difficulties. To the extent that Hypothesis 6 was to be proved against the subject's self-report it has to be accepted that Pupil 3 claimed to be satisfied with the relationships she had and so her Case Study was not considered to support the hypothesis. Despite this there was circumstantial evidence to suggest that some caveats should be added to the conclusion that Pupil 3's case study did not support Hypothesis 6.

Once again Pupil 4 remained an anomaly within the Vulnerable Group, with no obvious explanation from the Case Studies for his membership of this group. This is discussed further in Chapter 10.9.

CHAPTER 10 : DISCUSSION

This chapter seeks to place the results discussed in Chapter 9 within the wider theoretical context discussed in Part 1 in order to identify and inform potential areas of further investigation, and to point the way towards possible interventions designed to address and ameliorate areas of concern. Chapter 11 records conclusions drawn from the research data which seek to identify areas of concern or need, with relevant recommended interventions intended to address those concerns or needs then being set out in Chapter 12.

10.1 Availability Of Subjects

As discussed in Chapter 9.1 18 pupils (roughly 6.5% of the school population) were unaccounted for at the time of the self-esteem assessment. These pupils were apparently neither marked as absent nor present in the classrooms. This is a cause for serious concern but unfortunately it is not unduly surprising. This is a school identified in its last two Ofsted reports as having high levels of absenteeism, much of it internal. 'Internal absenteeism' is when pupils arrive at school and register but do not attend lessons.

Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) noted that 'post-registration truants' were not always absent from school, but sometimes remained lurking within sound of the school bell, so that they could attend those lessons which interested them and avoid others. Although many truants leave the premises after registration the author's professional experience supports the view of Kinder et al that many wander the corridors, hide in lavatories or store room areas or at the edges of the school premises such as in the woods that adjoin the school playing fields. Reports from the school staff to the author and experience of working with the subject school over several years suggests that there is a high probability that such pupils spend their time smoking cigarettes, taking or dealing in drugs or alcohol, causing vandalism to school property, stealing school or other pupils' property, or are involved in bullying or other anti-social and dysfunctional behaviours.

Malcolm, Thorpe and Lowden (1996) highlight a long list of negative factors which correlate with truancy including anti-social behaviours, mental health issues and low educational attainments. Casey and Smith (1995), through analysis of the England and Wales Cohort Study, demonstrate a strong link between truancy and subsequent labour market and educational outcomes. The association between truancy and crime has also been noted (DfEE, 1999) and truancy is central to the agenda for collaboration between police and schools (DfEE and The Home Office, 2001). Consequently it is regretted that these pupils were not available for this study.

Various studies have explored explanations for truancy, usually taking one of three perspectives; the child's, the relevant professionals' (school staff and the Education Welfare Service) and parents'.

Children's own explanations for truancy, as listed in rank order by Kinder et al (ibid), are given as:

- The influence of friends and peers, who are seen as encouraging truancy as a status-seeking activity or as a way of joining in or blending in, and sometimes teasing or goading the child into truanting
- Relationships with teachers, seen as lacking respect/fairness
- The content and delivery of the curriculum, seen as lacking in relevance and stimulus
- Family factors, either parental attitudes or family problems
- Bullying

- The classroom context, either because of teachers' inability to control, or problems arising from the child's own personality or learning abilities.

The views of professionals working in education, as collected and analysed by Kinder, Harland, Wilkin and Wakefield (1995) include:

1. Personal factors
   - Lack of self-esteem, social skills, confidence
   - Poor peer relations
   - Lack of academic ability
   - Special needs
   - Lack of concentration/ self-management skills

2. Family and community factors
   - Parentally condoned absence
   - Not valuing education
   - Domestic problems
   - Inadequate or inconsistent parenting
   - Economic deprivation
   - A community lack of self-esteem

3. School factors
   - The ease with which pupils could slip away unnoticed
   - Relationships with teachers and peers

- Problems relating to the relevance of school and the curriculum to the truants.

Parents' views on the causes of truancy, as explored by Kinder and Wilkin (1998) include:

- Peer pressure and bullying
- Boredom at school
- Teacher relationships
- Lack of school discipline
- Parental influence

Evaluative studies on the efficacy of intervention strategies for poor school attendance (Kinder, Harland, Wilkin and Wakefield, 1995) have highlighted the need for such initiatives to take into account the tripartite influences on children's behaviour: individual factors, family and social factors and school factors. Thus successful programmes should:

- Provide support for emotional, social and behavioural needs such as general counselling, raising self-esteem, developing coping strategies and social skills etc.
- Work with parents, carers and the wider community, offer breakfast clubs and after school activities to the pupils and their families.
- Monitor attendance lesson by lesson, use attendance data pro-actively

Evidence such as the above has directly informed the recommendations made in Chapter 12 of this work.

Atkinson, Halsey, Wilkin and Kinder (2000) conducted a wide ranging survey of initiatives for raising attendance in use by schools and LEAs in England and Wales. These have been classified under the following headings:

- Service-level developments involving Education Welfare Services and schools
- Preventative strategies involving all pupils within a school or year group or all teachers within a school
- Initial response to absence targeting pupils absent on a particular day
- Early intervention targeting pupils vulnerable to attendance problems
- Strategies aimed at pupils with identified attendance problems targeting pupils with attendance below a certain level.
- Initiatives aimed at disaffected pupils with very poor attendance and often additional problems.

On the evidence gained through this survey Atkinson et al (2000) conclude that effective strategies take account of the need both for prevention and for intervention. Strategies which discourage casual absence - first day responses to absence or the development of a more effective recording and monitoring system for attendance – also provide the means of identifying those who need further intervention.

Research reviewing empirical evidence on intervention strategies aimed at truancy is unanimous in concluding that 'money is better deployed earlier in schooling in order to anticipate and thus prevent later problems' (Learmonth, 1995, p.53). Easen, Clark and Wootten (1997) also conclude that an attendance project aimed at younger children who have not yet become disaffected is likely to be much more effective and cost-effective than spending on special provision to support long-term non-attenders to return to schooling. Such findings are entirely in tune with the present research which emphasises the primacy of early intervention over all other interventions.

Given the high proportion of SEN-registered pupils who were absent at the time of the present survey (17 out of 36 pupils; 47%) it appears likely that the trends of early withdrawal from formal education, poor attendance levels and low educational achievement identified in Chapter 2.3.3.3 were already in evidence within this sub-population.

Ofsted (2001) draws attention to the sometimes highly contentious nature of what constitutes a legitimate authorised absence. Although the 1996 Education Act (DES, 1996) makes clear the fact that only schools, not parents, may authorise absence the problem of parentally condoned absences persists. 'Some of the plausible, or at least practically irrefutable explanations which schools receive for absence, which they then classify as authorised, are questionable' (Ofsted, 2001, p2). With 'authorised absences' including reasons such as 'on holiday' or absent to go shopping with a parent or care for a sibling, providing the parent provides an authorisation

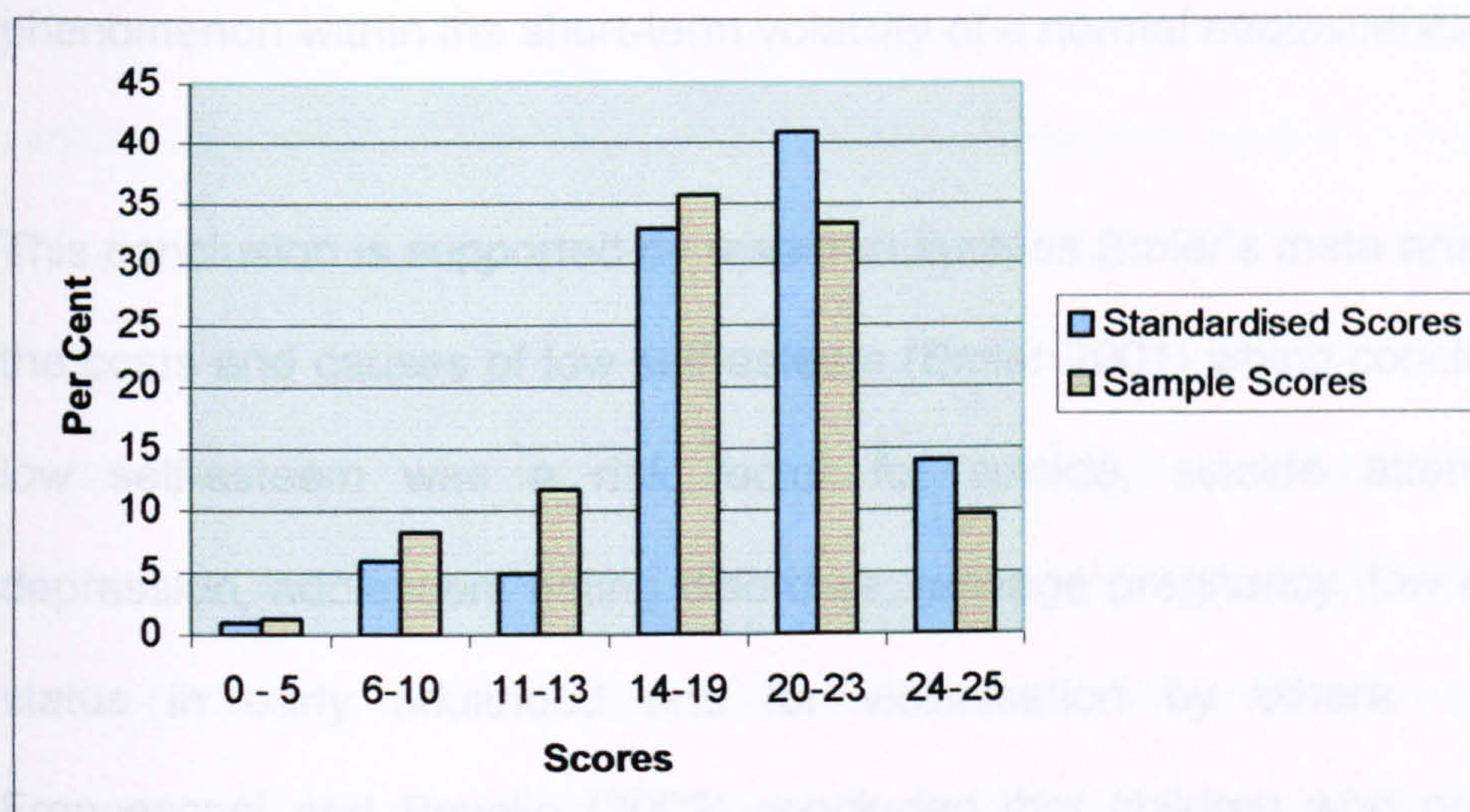
note, it is apparent that there is sometimes a somewhat smudged line between authorised and unauthorised absence. This is indicative also of the ambiguous level of importance some parents, often themselves of limited educational background, ascribe to formal education and qualifications. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 10.2. It is thought likely that many of the absentees, whether with absence marks (some of which will have been unauthorised absences) or without, might well have fallen in the Vulnerable Group.

10.2 Relative Self-Esteem

While Hypothesis 1 assumed the existence of a group of pupils with significantly low or very low self-esteem, proving that this was the case only confirmed what would be expected in any representative community. Hypothesis 1 was attempting to confirm that, as with Year 7 pupils across the United Kingdom, a proportion of them would have self-esteem at levels that made them potentially vulnerable to a range of other dysfunctions. This in fact was the case.

The significant factor here was that in comparison to the standardised figures the skew of the research sample population figures meant that far more of the Year 7 pupils in this study had overall self-esteem scores in the 'low' and 'very low' categories than adolescents of their age would be expected to have (see Chapter 9.2). The standardised model had 13% of responses in the low/very low self-esteem range. The results obtained from the sample examined in this study, with 21.3% of respondents evidencing low/very low self-esteem, showed a considerable variance against the standardised model. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Comparison Of Distributions Of Standardised Self-Esteem Scores With Sample Scores



In seeking to explore the degree to which this finding might reflect the transient phenomenon of short-term volatility in a normal adolescence rather than some more fundamental difficulty the sample findings were compared with Gould et al's work referred to in Chapter 2.3.1 (Gould et al., 1980). Whilst Gould et al's work focused on clinical dysfunction rather than low or very low self-esteem, previous studies (see Chapter 5.4.4) have indicated a high degree of co-existence between the two.

Gould et al found a 12% level of clinical dysfunction in children within a range of prevalence between 6% and 37%. Notwithstanding the variance from the standardised model the sample results in the low / very low self-esteem range fall well within this range of clinical dysfunction as identified by Gould et al. Whilst therefore acknowledging that normal adolescence is

turbulent (see Chapter 2.2) the sample results suggest that it remains reasonable to attribute the low levels of self-esteem in the Vulnerable Group to a degree of mental health difficulties rather than purely as a transient phenomenon within the short-term volatility of a normal adolescence.

This conclusion is supported by research such as Emler's meta analysis into the costs and causes of low self-esteem (Emler 2001) which concluded that low self-esteem was a risk factor for suicide, suicide attempts and depression, adolescent eating disorders, teenage pregnancy, low economic status in early adulthood and for victimisation by others. Ermisch, Francesconi and Pevalin (2002) concluded that children who grow up in poverty are more likely to have lower self-esteem and 'to feel useless' than their contemporaries in general. Ermisch et al's report was produced for the Department of Work and Pensions and used to support the proposal that self-esteem should be used by the government as an additional measure of social exclusion.

Explanations for the sample skew found in the present research can only be speculative but it is felt likely that this finding reflects the two distinct educational communities that the school seems to serve (see Chapter 7.5). The majority of the pupils have good attendance figures and good educational attainments. A sizeable minority exhibits all the behaviours that are associated with an extremely deprived and socially disadvantaged community including high absenteeism rates and low academic attainments

(34% of pupils achieved five or more A - C passes at GCSE compared to a national average of 45%; see Chapter 7.2.3).

Many pupils within the school, while maybe not aware of their community's ranking in the UK Local Deprivation Index, will be well aware of many of the physical manifestations of that Index. We have already noted in Chapter 5.2 the overlap of factors likely to increase a child's mental health problems such as poverty, parental unemployment, poor housing or low self-esteem, and the factors indicating a likelihood of poor educational achievement and anti-social behaviour. In relation to the rest of the UK therefore many of these pupils are likely to have more limited life chances in a whole range of areas including educational, employment, health and social opportunities. Whilst these deprivation factors are thus viewed as existing alongside or impacting upon low self-esteem it is apparent that low self-esteem levels are a common accompaniment to social and economic deprivation. Iacovou (2004) concluded that the economic and social circumstances in which a child grows up has an enormous effect on later outcomes in areas including education and self-esteem.

Sub-test analysis of the four component factors making up self-esteem threw up the interesting finding that these subjects had, on the whole, higher levels of social and parental self-esteem than the norm, but lower general and academic self-esteem. The overall low level of self-esteem scores of the subjects appeared to be predominantly a factor of the exceptionally low academic self-esteem that these subjects exhibited. This finding was not

predicted and there is always a danger in post-hoc explanations. However, it is possible that the answer lies in the economic history of the subject borough over the past quarter-century, the low value that the community has traditionally placed on educational achievement and the well established phenomenon of group cohesion in the face of adversity (see below).

As a predominantly stable working class area with productive mines and various spin-off industries good wages have been available to physically fit and hard working males for several generations back. Employment rates were high and the more able could achieve promotion within these industries regardless of educational qualifications. Women in such communities traditionally achieved their economic and social status through the men in their families. Marriages tended to take place at a younger age, pregnancies to start earlier and families to be larger than might be the national norm. Employment outside the home was not a high priority for such women. Some of this is still evident in the current figures. These show that in 1997 the borough as a whole was averaging 350 conceptions in under 18 year olds per year with a conception rate of 13.9 per 1000 for 13 to 15 year olds. The figure for England and Wales as a whole was 9.0 per 1000 (Office Of National Statistics, Conception Data (1995-1997). For the bulk of the local population educational achievement has been of only minor importance in economic well being or social standing. Male physical prowess and female home and family making skills were far more important than formal qualifications. Schooling has been relegated to a social experience and the

accepted way of passing the years until old enough to marry and have children or to enrol as an apprentice in the mines.

Within a few short years this situation altered irrevocably (see Chapter 7.2). By March 1999 the unemployment rate for the electoral ward that this school served was 10.59% as compared to a national average of 4.9%. Many of those in employment were in low paid or part time jobs. The mean weekly income was £318.00 and 10% of income earners earned less than £153.10 per week. This was significantly lower than any other area within the same relatively low-income Local Authority District where the mean weekly income was £336.53 and the lowest 10% earned a mean of £175 per week. Nationally the mean wage was £465.00 (local figures from Poverty In XXXXXXXXX: A Profile Of Deprivation – 2000, The Community Development Unit, Chief Executive's Department, 2000, national figures from "www.incomesdata.co.uk"). Suddenly the life certainties of the population had changed and in order to make economically successful lives, with all the other life chances that follow from a reasonable income level, certain basic assumptions had to alter.

It is speculated that, in accordance with the normal behaviours of groups as identified by McKenna (2000), the economic threat to the community's existence represented by these changes will have served to increase the community's group cohesion, such that peer group, family and social relationships will increase in relative importance. This would serve to explain the low general self-esteem and the high levels of social and parental

self-esteem evidenced by the sample relative to the norm. It is further speculated that those individuals who were able to accept the message that self-help lay through education now, and that education was a reasonable aspiration for them would be among the individuals whose academic and overall self-esteem followed the standardised distribution. This would leave a large rump of individuals who have found difficulty in adapting to the new realities. Explanations for this apparent difficulty in accepting or acting on the new reality include:

- Difficulty in accepting they will not make out some how without educational achievements.
- An acceptance of the need for education but a belief that it is not something that they can achieve for themselves.
- A feeling of being trapped among the conflicting messages from school, from home and from what they see around them.

Further light can be thrown on the subtest variations found within the subject population through a consideration of Emler's research findings (Emler 2001). Following a review of a large number of studies published in peer referred scientific journals, particularly published meta-analyses, Emler concluded that the strongest influence upon a person's self esteem was the approval and acceptance of their parents. Parenting styles characterised by approval and acceptance of their off-spring led to children with healthy levels of self esteem. At the same time Emler found that academic successes and failure were linked to high and low self-esteem. Emler's work did not distinguish between types of self esteem but it would be reasonable to

conclude that in a society where children see their parents approval and acceptance as not relating to their educational attainments such children will be able to maintain higher social and parental self-esteem while believing themselves to be educationally of low worth.

If the above socio-historical explanation for the community's self-esteem pattern and low academic self-esteem in particular is accepted, and it is acknowledged that it is only speculative and offered for consideration, then there are obvious implications for the ameliorative interventions that can be offered. This will be explored further both in the consideration of locus of control later in this chapter (Chapter 10.6) and in the chapter on interventions (Chapter 12).

10.3 Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties As A Factor In Learning Difficulties

As previously stated (Chapters 9.3 and 10.2) the single most significant factor in the low overall self-esteem of the subjects was their low academic self-esteem. Had the pupils with low or very low academic self-esteem largely appeared on the SEN Register for learning difficulties it would have been possible to argue that their low academic self-esteem was a secondary factor to their learning difficulties and that they were receiving the appropriate support programme. If this had been the case it would have been reasonable to conclude that the most useful way of raising their self-esteem would be to concentrate on raising their learning attainments with some simple self-esteem raising work included with their basic educational programme.

In fact the majority of the pupils on the SEN Register for identified learning, behavioural or physical difficulties who participated in this research (36/54, that is 66.7%; see Table 15) appeared to have overall self-esteem levels above the vulnerable cut-off point. Conversely, 69% of respondents (49 out of 71) with academic self-esteem scores of 0 to 2 (low / very low) were not SEN-registered. This finding should act as a caution to teachers and other professionals. While taking care not to look for difficulties in pupils who are making satisfactory progress teachers might well find it useful to be aware of those pupils who are not on the SEN register but who have a serious lack of academic self-esteem.

The SEN pupils appeared to feel reasonably content with their academic performance. This suggests that pupils who have been identified as having some degree of learning difficulty, and who are receiving support for these difficulties, either did not experience any negative effect of their learning difficulties on their self-esteem or else find their support benefits their self-esteem.

One explanation for this phenomena could be found in Dweck's incremental versus entity model of academic belief (Dweck, 2000). As discussed in Chapter 5.4.4 above Dweck suggests that individuals who hold an entity model of their abilities feel most comfortable in an environment that does not challenge their academic abilities too much, possible the situation for pupils recognised and supported for SEN. It may be that SEN support reinforces the pupils' perceptions of the legitimacy of pre-existing low academic self-esteem, providing an element of comfort in relatively low academic achievement without the discomfort of major challenges that might stretch them to full achievement of latent potential.

Most pupils on the SEN Register are taught in small groups of similar ability pupils. Frequently they receive their lessons in the more nurturing atmosphere of the Learning Support Centre. This Centre is structured much more on the primary school model with pupils remaining in the same room with the same staff for their time there. Previous Ofsted reports have praised this provision and it is understandable that pupils flourish there.

On the basis of these findings it appears that the focus of current interventions is on the more overt manifestations of physical, learning or - as referred to in Chapter 1.3 - behavioural difficulties rather than the more internalised issues of mental health such as self-esteem, which remain largely unaddressed and quietly corrosive. It also appears that the majority of pupils identified by the research as being potentially vulnerable to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (the Vulnerable Group) were seen by the staff at their school as making satisfactory educational progress. On the available evidence it is not possible to say how accurate this perception was; whether or not these pupils were reaching their educational potential or what level this potential was seen to be. Above a minimal absolute level, pupils deemed to be achieving at the level their underlying abilities would predict without the need for additional strategies would not normally be included on the SEN register. Despite the school staff's assessment of these pupils' performance as satisfactory this research has revealed that these pupils had significantly low academic self-esteem, and that the majority of those with low academic self-esteem are not currently being supported through the SEN Register. Chapter 5.4.4 discussed in some detail the body of research evidence indicating the clearly detrimental effect that low self-esteem can have on a whole range of life chances. This would suggest that these pupils were at risk both in their academic performance and also in their lives in general. If a practical tool to assess this vulnerability could be devised, and this thesis has shown that it can, then interventions are clearly indicated.

10.4 Learning Needs Versus Emotional And Behavioural Needs

Professionals who work in education, advising schools on emotional health matters, would express little surprise that the school's fairly large SEN Register was almost entirely composed of the names of pupils with learning difficulties rather than EBD. Such a pattern is common in many secondary schools. Entry on the SEN Register implies that the school will put strategies in place to support the pupil with its problem. Many pupils with learning difficulties have associated social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, as indeed do many adolescents without learning needs. Teachers themselves recognise this and in discussion over a child's behaviour acknowledgement of the role of that child's frustration or self-esteem in the face of his or her educational difficulties is very common. Unfortunately this is rarely translated into action. As the SEN Register witnesses, and as had been identified in Chapter 1.3, there are relatively few EBD referrals, those referrals that are made being much more commonly the result of behavioural issues than emotional ones.

There has remained an apparent acceptance among many school managements and teachers of the assumption that schools are there to teach academic skills and knowledge. Behavioural issues are not their problem and only become issues when they have a serious enough impact upon this teaching. By that stage the issue is often immediate and unavoidable and needs serious and immediate strategies and structures to

contain, punish or set an example to others. More thoughtful and productive interventions are often too late by this stage.

This raises clear questions as to the purpose of schooling, initially discussed in Chapter 1.4. The assumption that the mathematics teacher is there to teach mathematics and the geography teacher to teach geography, and that EBD issues are not really their concern, is reinforced by the focus of many of the DfES initiatives identified in Chapter 1.4 and by the government indices that school success is measured and advertised by. The DfES' desire to publish quantifiable statistics such as SATs results and GCSE tables, rather than more qualitative indices of success such as personal fulfilment, happiness, skills of independence, social skills, social responsibility, moral understanding etc., all shape the school's priorities.

As the General Teaching Council for England/ Guardian/ Mori survey of 2003 identified, however, these government and school management priorities give rise to a range of conflicts with the priorities of many of the front-line teaching staff. 61% of teachers participating in the 2003 survey identified "developing the whole child" as one of their top three statements describing their vision of the role of the teaching profession in the 21st century. 60% cited "to create active and responsible citizens" and 49% "to maximise the strengths of the individual". This contrasts with only 28% who cited "to ensure basic levels of literacy and numeracy", 11% quoting "to produce a skilled and effective workforce" and only 2% "to meet the needs of

a competitive economy". Similarly, the top three demotivating factors identified by teachers in the same survey emerged as:

- workload
- initiative overload
- target-driven culture.

Emotional, social and behavioural issues are all known to be of paramount importance to the fulfilment of academic potential. Nonetheless, the experience of this researcher, over many years of discussing pupils' progress with teachers, is that there is a tendency among teaching staff towards resignation in the face of these issues, having regard to the conflicts identified above. Frequently school staff do recognise the enormous emotional, social and behavioural burdens that some pupils work under, and the impact that these are likely to have on the child's behaviour, happiness and education. Nonetheless, equally frequently the competing priorities are such that they do not feel able to take from this any responsibility for identifying appropriate areas for intervention (see Chapters 10.3 and 11.3).

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) attempts to tackle this problem by putting much more emphasis on emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), now called Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). However, this increased focus on the social and psychological vulnerability blocking pupils' development is not matched by a reflection of these factors in school league table data, which retains its focus on core curriculum subjects.

10.5 The Early Identification Of Potentially Vulnerable Pupils

Chapter 1.2 of this work identified some of the pressures affecting the early recognition of emotional and behavioural needs, while Chapters 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 explored the implications for both the individual and society as a whole of leaving these needs unmet. Behavioural difficulties are seen as an enormous problem for the LEA as a whole and in particular for this school. One might, therefore, expect a large number of EBD entries on the SEN Register and some serious consideration given to the early identification and support of EBD, as opposed to the containment and punishment of its later and more intractable manifestations.

The school has quite a highly structured punishment system ranging from 'warnings', through a report card system, detentions, a Holding Unit, a Referral Unit, temporary exclusion and finally permanent exclusion. The Holding Unit is a permanently operating room to which pupils can be sent as an immediate response to behavioural problems. It acts as a kind of 'time out' giving breathing space to both pupils and staff. Frequently pupils return to their classes the next day, or even later on that day. For some pupils this Holding Unit acts as a processing centre prior to their admittance to the Referral Unit for placements lasting up to 5 days. The Referral Unit is seen as an alternative to temporary exclusion and is part of the school's initiative to reduce the high number of both fixed term and permanent exclusions they have had and been censored for.

In part this has been successful. Historically the school had temporary, or fixed term, exclusions in the top 25% for the LEA. By the end of the academic year 2001 – 2002 it had got its figures down to within the lowest 25% for the LEA. Unfortunately it appears that the strategies in place have been more cosmetic than actually addressed the underlying situation. By the end of the same academic year the school was still returning figures for permanent exclusion way above either government target figures or the LEA average (see Table 35). This suggests that whatever changes have been put in place they have not helped pupils to avoid reaching the stage where the school permanently excludes them.

Table 35: Government Target, LEA Mean And Subject School Actual Figures On Fixed Term And Permanent Exclusions, Academic Year 2001 - 2002

	Fixed Term	Permanent
Government Target	0.15%	0.35%
LEA Mean	5.68%	0.41%
Subject School	3.46%	1.08%

(Source: DfES figures from Excellence in Cities (2000 - 2001, LEA and subject school figures from unpublished LEA recorded data)

Both the Holding Unit and the Referral Unit are located in a suite of rooms used for general SEN support. While pupils are in these Units they are supposed to follow their normal timetable. Although these pupils have been labelled as too challenging and disruptive for qualified teachers to deal with,

during their time in the Units they are supervised and taught by Learning Support Assistants with no particular experience or training in EBD support. These placements are clearly and explicitly punitive. Letters home to the pupils' parents emphasise this. Pupils are not allowed out for breaks and they have a greatly reduced lunchtime taken within the Unit. There is no element of therapeutic intervention or attempt to examine or address the difficulties that have brought the pupils to these Units. For some pupils one experience in the Unit appears to be enough but for a core of pupils the recidivism rate is high. Data kept on the pupils who use the Unit (names of pupils, frequency of re-admittance, nature of offence etc) appear only to be taken for bureaucratic reasons (staffing and time tabling etc.) or to identify pupils who might warrant the next level of punishment at their next offence. It does not appear that pertinent questions are being asked of the data such as:

- Does the pupil know what leads them to these placements? Of three pupils asked at random on one day none of them could explain beyond, 'Because I've had 5 serious warning cards.', 'Because David was picking on me.' and 'Because I got in bother with Mr. ....'

- Does the pupil have the skills or strategies to avoid repeating this behaviour?

- Is there some psychological, emotional or behavioural reason why the pupil does not use these strategies?

- What therapeutic interventions or skill development programmes might alleviate this situation?

Once pupils are permanently excluded their names come before LEA Allocation Panels. Sometimes the LEA can persuade other local schools to accept them on a quid pro quo basis, sometimes they are allocated places at Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and occasionally they are allocated to extremely expensive out-of-area residential establishments to meet their behavioural needs. Professionals working in this field recognise that many pupils never again seriously engage with education after a permanent exclusion. Data on the exact number of such children is hard to come by as LEAs rarely record children as receiving no education. Frequently their names remain on the role of their last educational establishment. Sometimes they are nominally receiving interim tuition or being 'educated at home'. The ten educational psychologists working for the subject Borough were aware of twenty five young people from Year 8 onwards who were receiving no education and unlikely to do so in the future. They were also involved in several other cases where the child had received very scant education and was thought likely to leave the system altogether before too long. Educational psychologists are not always involved with children who are disengaged from education and it is thought likely that those cases that were known of represented the tip of a large but unrecorded ice-berg.

In the present research Pupil 1 (see Chapter 9.6.1) was not on the role of any school at the time of the interviews. Before this research was complete

many of the pupils who formed the Vulnerable Group were receiving extremely inconsistent education (Chapter 10.7)

Despite all this emphasis and expense spent on the more severe manifestations of behavioural problems Year 7 only had five pupils on its SEN Register for EBD. As the SEN Register is the prime tool for recording concerns about individual pupils and matching these concerns to targets and strategies to meet those targets, this suggests that pupils are not being recognised in the early stages of their difficulties when ameliorative action might be effective. If early identification is not taking place then interventions aimed at these early stages will not be planned. Since the initial data gathering stage of this research the school has introduced a mentoring system which does have a primarily therapeutic focus but this is a limited facility, offered for a relatively short period, often to help pupils over a specifically difficult period. The evidence suggests that the school is focussing its EBD provision on containing and reacting to the pupils' behavioural problems once they have become fairly severe. There is scant evidence of either efforts to early identification of possible underlying emotional issues followed by therapeutic intervention or on identifying aspects of the school system that could be adjusted to the social, emotional and behavioural benefit of all. This has obvious costs for the pupil, the school, the LEA and for society.

10.6 The Links Between Perceived Potency And Coping Strategies

Believing that you have the power to affect and direct your life is an essential pre-requisite to competent and productive decision making. The perception that a subject has of their power to affect their lives (their locus of control) will relate directly to their choice of coping strategies. The more internalised the locus of control the more powerful an agent an individual will believe themselves to be in shaping their lives and therefore the more willing they will be to exercise this power actively through focused strategies in response to life's challenges. This will be particularly so when combined with a reasonably functional level of self-esteem. Conversely, an individual who has dysfunctionally low levels of self-esteem and who sees the world as substantially beyond their control will be more likely to eschew the idea of trying to shape things through their own efforts.

Chapter 5.4.4 made reference to the research evidencing the inter-relationships between self-esteem and locus of control, and between locus of control and coping strategies. The nature and direction of these inter-relationships and any causal links has not been definitively established, but it is appropriate also at this point to recall the arguments of Dweck (2000), also referred to in Chapter 5.4. These arguments proposed a differentiation between one's perception of the nature of intelligence as either fixed and unchangeable (an entity theory approach) or as a commodity to be trained and developed (an incremental theory approach).

The results obtained in this research study indicated a degree of gender differentiation in the pupils' approaches to the selection of coping strategies, which in turn suggests the possibility of gender differentiation in the pupils' personal bias towards either entity theory or incremental theory. The pupils in the Vulnerable Group were found to have a significantly greater perception of an external locus of control in their lives than the Non-Vulnerable Group did. However, gender significance was noted in that the overall statistically significant relationship between vulnerability (i.e. self-esteem scores) and perceived locus of control appeared to be principally attributable to male responses. Within the Vulnerable Group it is males who have the more pronounced external locus of control perception. In the sample as a whole, however, it was females who recorded the more externalised locus of control focus. It would appear, therefore, that more males than females with an internal locus of control perceived themselves to be achieving success to the extent that they did not fall into the Vulnerable Group.

Looking then at the selection of coping strategies, while high scores for use of non-productive coping strategies were indicative of recourse to ineffective means of solving problems, such a score alone was not necessarily evidence that the subject does not cope with life's problems well. Some of the items that make up the non-productive style are definitely dysfunctional such as 'take drugs' or 'shut myself off from the problem so that I can avoid it'. Others were non-productive but not actively dysfunctional; for example a subject might well 'wish for a miracle'. As long as they had productive coping strategies to call on and so took active steps to solve the problem at

the same time as they wished for the miracle their wish would not necessarily detract from their ability to cope. For this reason the absence of productive coping strategies was seen as more important than the presence of non-productive coping strategies in isolation.

Analysis of the results indicated that vulnerable males tended to be less able to adopt productive coping strategies than their non-vulnerable counterparts, disinclined to refer to others and more likely to adopt non-productive strategies. Vulnerable females maintained an ability to seek productive coping styles, appeared more prepared to refer to others but still acknowledged greater use of non-productive coping styles than their non-vulnerable colleagues. There was an overall reluctance on the part of males - both vulnerable and non-vulnerable - to refer problems to others, whereas females appeared to be prepared to expand an already greater preparedness to refer to others when their own self-esteem is weakened. This tendency has the potential to be both a strength or a weakness depending on the degree to which calling on the skills of others empowers the subject or leads to a more fatalistic learned helplessness.

It would be appropriate also at this point to recall the conclusions of Messer (1972), referred to in Chapter 5.4.5, that boys who assumed responsibility for success and girls who assumed responsibility for failure tended to succeed. Superimposing Dweck's theories, referred to above, on to those of Messer would suggest that two parallel approaches should be considered when addressing the emotional and learning needs of vulnerable pupils. One

approach might be based entirely on interventions using an incremental theory basis, focussing on facilitating the development and application of the skills and competencies required to succeed. The other approach might be based more on the more traditional 'small steps' structure for learning support (see also Chapter 11.6) linked perhaps to an incremental theory-type approach to the development of more, and more reliance upon, productive coping styles. Both sets of interventions would be available to all pupils as deemed appropriate to their perceived needs. Based on the observations of Messer referred to above it would perhaps not be surprising to find that girls in the Vulnerable Group might be more likely to respond to the former structure, while boys - who would appear to be more inclined to view their difficulties as outside their control - might respond more readily to the latter, dual structure.

In considering possible interventions, therefore, aimed at raising self-esteem levels, developing productive coping styles, and facilitating the pupils' development of greater feelings of control over their lives there would appear to be scope to consider the extent to which this might be achievable through the development of a differentiated approach incorporating incremental theory-based interventions alongside the traditional approach. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 11.6.

10.7 The Seeds Of Alienation

Five pupils were identified from the Vulnerable Group for more in-depth investigation through case studies. At the time the measurements which identified these pupils as vulnerable were taken none of them appeared in the school's recording to have emotional or behavioural difficulties, although examination of their past records might have suggested a potential concern. By the time it came to conducting semi-structured interviews with these pupils two of them had left the school, one following a permanent exclusion, and one had had her emotional and behavioural problems recognised by the school at a more formal level. One pupil was extremely anxious and only one appeared to be making happy and healthy progress.

It is acknowledged that the catchment area of the subject school contains a sizeable population of disaffected, alienated and anti-social young people who have opted out of mainstream society, education and employment (Chapter 7). The experience of this researcher, working as an Educational Psychologist advising agencies such as Social Services, the Youth Offending Team, the Probation Service and others on the re-integration of young people out of school, is that a small number of this population will come to the notice of the authorities. Frequently this follows their involvement with the criminal courts or after they have been picked up on raids looking for under-age workers, homeless or prostitutes. The Educational Psychology Service is then asked for advice on appropriate educational placements and programmes. The success rate for these young

people who do come to the notice of the various authorities and who are offered a second chance at re-joining mainstream society is low. Many of them, along with those who do not come to the attention of the authorities again, are very unlikely to seek or obtain work in the formal employment market. They will form part of the growing underclass in the country, those operating outside the system and appearing in no government statistics.

The seeds of this alienation are often sown early. It is in Year 7, the year immediately after transition to secondary school, that many children start to fall out of the educational system for good. It is possible, although not provable, that Pupils 1 and 2 (see Chapter 9.6.1) were at an early stage in this disengagement.

Whilst it has not been possible within the scope of this research to undertake any comprehensive longitudinal studies on the sample a brief informal review of the sample's progress since the original survey has been conducted. One of the points considered in this review was the extent to which EBD referrals under the current SEN system succeeded in addressing pupils' emotional needs. It will be recalled that it has been argued that such referrals currently represent a reaction to the disruptions of behavioural issues rather than an attempt to identify and address the pupils' own emotional or social needs. Of the five pupils identified in this research as being on the SEN Register for EBD at the time of the survey, one has already been permanently excluded within eighteen months, while the other four are all regular attendees at the School's Holding and Referral Units,

have particularly poor attendance records, and in some cases already have extensive police involvement in their lives.

Additionally the researcher's professional role as an Educational Psychologist for the subject school has, since the initial data was gathered, involved work with many of the pupils who fell into the Vulnerable Group. This work has not been statistically quantified but has included supporting one pupil identified as a heroin user and several who, after a string of difficulties and the involvement of the Youth Offending Team, are no longer on roll at the school.

Whilst the extent to which the earlier identification of their vulnerability and attempts to address the relevant issues may or may not have improved the outcomes cannot be determined with certainty, it nonetheless appears clear that the current timing and nature of any interventions have not succeeded in improving these pupils' life chances to any discernible extent. It would appear, therefore, at the very least that earlier or alternative interventions would be unlikely to achieve any worse outcomes than those achieved at present.

10.8 Interview Versus School Staff Evidence

One of the interesting factors revealed through the Head of Year questionnaires and school files was what a cursory understanding of the pupils the staff were able to gain in their dealings with them. Many factors pertinent to the pupils' educational, social, emotional and moral development were not known to the school and therefore could not be taken into account when assessing or supporting the pupils. Perhaps the most marked example of this was the case of Pupil 5 (see Chapter 9.6.1). In a general de-briefing after the interviews the Head of Year revealed that he was aware that things were 'not straightforward' in the boy's life but had had no opportunity to investigate the situation.

Once again this researcher's experience confirms that this is a very common occurrence. During the type of nurturing, therapeutic and supportive assessments that an Educational Psychologist can conduct, often including home visits, liaison with Social Services, paediatricians and other professionals and with a background knowledge of siblings' difficulties in other schools, extremely pertinent issues come up that are not known to the school. Examples of this are pupils referred for entirely unrelated concerns who, it is revealed, have recently been bereaved, taken into Local Authority care, had a long-standing but unknown at school diagnosis of autism, are giving evidence in abuse cases, are being evicted, have intermittent hearing loss and many, many more.

A further factor to be noted when considering the evidence gathered for these case studies from school staff was the suspicion of selection bias in the adjectives chosen to describe the pupils. Although a wide range of adjectives was given to describe the pupils and the questionnaire was designed to encourage the use of adjectives the Head of Year generated for himself in reality the same small selection was circled each time. Pressure on staff time would seem a likely explanation for this. Whatever the cause it must suggest that some caution should be used in interpreting the information so gathered.

On the basis of the above it would be reasonable to conclude that it would be extremely advantageous to the pupil, their education and the smooth running of the school if there were a system whereby staff could take a more holistic approach, have time to understand the pupils as individuals and to liaise with a wide range of other agencies as appropriate to individual pupils' needs. This would appear to reflect the desired priorities of teachers as identified in the General Teaching Council for England/ Guardian/ Mori survey of 2003 (see Chapter 10.4), but would appear out of step with the current government priorities.

10.9 The Significance Of Friendship Styles

One of the major difficulties in considering friendships and the significance they might have in an individual's life is the lack of any generally agreed taxonomy of friendship problems or relationship difficulties (Gottman, 1991). The difficulty in agreeing a taxonomy for problems reflects the extremely broad range of 'normal' and 'functional' relationships and so the problem in identifying what lies outside this range and also the highly subjective nature of the phenomena of friendship. Some of the more quantifiable phenomena of friendships and social relationships are outlined in Chapter 4.1 (The Development Of Social Relationships). Research of this sort, while good at describing patterns in observable processes, does little to illuminate the experience of the individual. By and large researchers explore children's friendships through the qualitative and subjective experiences of the child rather than by more quantifiable measures.

Despite this lack of an objective and robust measuring instrument for relationships there is a body of evidence to suggest that the way in which an individual manages their friendships through childhood and adolescence is reflected in their later psychological adjustment (Chapter 4.2). For this reason some consideration of these subjective experiences is extremely pertinent to this research.

Of the six case studies that were used to test Hypothesis 6, relating to the subjects' subjective view of their social relationships, some evidence of

relationship difficulties was evident in two of the three case studies drawn from the Vulnerable Group category, Pupils 3 and 5 (see Chapter 9.6.1).

Pupil 3 had particularly erratic, volatile and sometimes problematic social relationships. Those pupils she identified as her best friends were also the cause of many of her behavioural difficulties and, she claimed, much unhappiness.

Pupil 4 was the apparent anomaly in the Vulnerable Group of pupils. On the surface (semi-structured interview, Head of Year's written assessment) he appeared to be happy and well integrated with good social relationships. Despite this there was some evidence from the Head of Year's informal remarks and from Pupil 4's self-esteem assessment script, that there might have been deeper problems than were revealed by the case study.

Pupil 5 was a deeply unhappy and lonely boy. He appeared isolated and miserable at school, at home and out in the community. This did not appear to be recognised or addressed by anybody. All the evidence suggests that such a situation will impact extremely negatively on Pupil 5's adult life-chances.

On the basis of this research it is concluded that some consideration of the friendship and general social skills of the pupils would be extremely beneficial to the smooth running of the school, the happiness of the pupils and the later successful adult lives of these pupils.

CHAPTER 11 : CONCLUSIONS

The discussion in Chapter 10 addressed a range of issues arising directly from the research. For ease of presentation the conclusions contained in this chapter are grouped under the following broad headings: -

- Background socio-economic considerations,
- Prevention or cure,
- The management of behavioural issues,
- The management of emotional issues,
- The management of learning issues, and
- The learning environment.

The resulting interventions recommended in Chapter 12 then seek to develop the broad themes, proposing specific approaches aimed at addressing the identified areas of need or concern.

11.1 Linking Research, Conclusions, Recommendations And Outcomes; Caveats And Cautions

The aim of this research has been to identify some of the variables implicated in the social and emotional life chances of adolescents, to draw conclusions about these variables and opine on the outcomes for those adolescents and to recommend ameliorative interventions. It is recognised that there is always a degree of danger in drawing general conclusions from a single research project even when, as in this case, it is backed up by the considerable practical experience of the researcher.

Additionally, in the interests of academic simplicity and neatness there is a pressure to attempt to present these findings, conclusions and recommendations with a one-to-one correspondence. In reality the frailty common to all dynamic psycho-social research lies in the complex plethora of inter-dependent variables and the ethical restraints on withholding interventions believed to be beneficial from vulnerable individuals to research their effects. No matter how sophisticated the research tool it is rarely possible to say with absolute certainty in which direction causal relationships run, what are the exact dynamics of multiple and compounding vulnerabilities or what is the relative balance of influence and impact of any particular group of factors.

As a consequence of this:

- direct one-to-one linking of vulnerabilities, conclusions and recommendations, while made as far as possible, are not practical or realistic. To attempt them would be to take an over simplistic view of the infinite sophistication of human life
- it is not possible to say what the outcome for any particular individual would have been had their circumstances been different, had different or no interventions been offered or had the dysfunction been identified earlier.

It is the strong contention of this research that such uncertainties do not militate against drawing conclusions or making recommendations. Indeed, it is considered unacceptable to do nothing in the face of:

- A common recognition that the present situation is not working for individuals, the school or society (see Chapter 7),
- The low success rate of attempts to re-engage young people once they have become totally alienated from mainstream society (see Chapter 10.7),
- The good reason to believe that problems will at least be less severe with appropriate interventions,
- The recognition that sensitively targeted interventions are unlikely to make the situation worse, and
- The need for carefully monitored and evaluated intervention programmes to be in place for the development of evidence-based practice.

Despite the best efforts of the various support agencies it is felt probable that a body of pupils will always exist whose adult life chances are vulnerable to emotional, social or behavioural dysfunction.

11.2 Background Socio-Economic Considerations

One issue that came out particularly strongly in the case studies conducted for this research (see Chapter 10.8 Interview Versus School Staff Evidence) was how little time or opportunity teaching staff had to know the whole pupil. Issues of great significance to the pupils' operation within the school community were at best only suspected by the staff whose responsibility it was to manage those pupils' operation at school. This left staff with an incomplete understanding of the pupils and the reasons for their behaviour. It also left pupils with no obvious or ready point of contact for in-school support.

Fraser (1998) conducted a review of United Kingdom and international literature on the use of early intervention schemes in education. This was commissioned by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department. This review identified the absolute necessity of viewing children in their wider social context. Fraser distinguished between the 'inspirational' model of over coming disadvantage, a model based on the belief that providing good enough education in schools will provide equality of opportunity and so overcome disadvantage, and the 'realistic' model, which is based on a deeper analysis of the complex world the child inhabits. She concluded that children's needs can not be seen as separable from family needs and that policy makers and practitioners need to take this into consideration as they put practical initiatives into place. Fraser identified the development of stronger school-home links, local action and co-operating with other

agencies within the community as vital to the success of initiatives to ameliorate socio-educational disadvantage. Professionals supporting vulnerable children need to inform their practice through knowledge of the pupils' home circumstances and the influences and pressures on them. Equally strategies put into place in the school building, without parents knowledge let alone active involvement are likely to be wasted effort.

The impact of parental involvement in children's education, both on the child's educational achievement and on their general adjustment is explored further by Desforges (2003). This research identifies parental interest in the education of their children, regardless of the educational attainments of those parents themselves, as the crucial factor in children's educational and wider success.

Consideration of the case studies conducted as part of this research shows how useful an understanding of the whole child and their social context would be to supporting that child. Although Pupil 1 was not available for interview the balance of probability suggests that an understanding of his social situation would be crucial to supporting both his identified emotional needs and his educational needs and in establishing and maintaining a consistent education for him. Similarly, the social and emotional vulnerability of Pupil 5 was much easier to understand in the light of his complicated social circumstances. Support for his vulnerability would be much more effectively targeted had the school staff known of these circumstances.

It was concluded that there was a need for increased staff awareness of many issues in pupils' lives of relevance to their functioning in school and therefore to the ability of staff to target interventions appropriately. McCaleb (1997) emphasises both the need for teachers to have a greater awareness of their pupils' out-of-school lives, and also for this awareness to be manifest to their pupils and families. Teachers need to understand the social background, culture and value systems of their pupils, to 'talk the same language' as their pupils' parents and to maintain a direct and positive dialogue with these parents and families. Teachers, she advises, must understand that the relationship they establish with their pupils' parents and families impacts on the relationship they can maintain with their pupils and thus the degree of involvement or alienation from school and education that these pupils will feel. If parents view teachers as not interested in their children's lives or not understanding or valuing their culture the impact on the children's engagement with school and education will be negative. Thus a real and obvious awareness of the pupils' wider backgrounds is not only essential if school staff are to understand their pupils behaviour and offer support, it is also a valuable tool in the fight to counter pupils' alienation from the school environment.

The school could not be expected to address background socio-economic issues directly. Never-the-less it appears essential that staff acquire and demonstrate an active awareness of the range of social circumstances pertaining within the catchment area and, where appropriate, tailor policies

to take account of the range of realities that pupils experience as 'normal life'.

It is concluded that existing transitional programmes covering pupils' shift from primary to secondary school environments are not effective in providing either pupils or staff with sufficient awareness of the needs and requirements of the other parties (see also Chapter 11.7). It is further concluded that efforts to tailor educational interventions by reference to underlying social issues would also assist in reducing social dissonance by limiting the number/range of conflicting sets of social, emotional and behavioural settings for the adolescent to integrate into their internal schemas (see Chapter 2.4.1).

An example of such socially referenced interventions would be the establishment of breakfast or homework clubs. Research suggests that both of these initiatives have had good success in addressing directly and indirectly issues of poor housing, social inclusion, inadequate social care, hunger, health inequalities, truancy, pupil concentration, educational attainment, the social and emotional health of both the pupils and their families and community regeneration (Harrop and Palmer, 2000; McBeath, Kirwan et al, 2001 and ContinYou, 2003)

What is recommended here is a collaborative approach involving parents, students, teachers, the wider community and other professionals. The recommendations of this thesis are clearly targeted at teachers and other

professionals working to improve the educational experiences of the young people in their charge, thus the onus for action falls on these professionals rather than on the parents. It would be wise for such professionals to keep in mind that many of today's parents were yesterdays disaffected students and there is no reason to believe that their attitudes towards school, education and educationalists has changed since the days when they were doing all in their power to avoid contact with what they viewed as an alienating, intimidating experience. Sensitivity and tact will need to be employed as parents are reached out to on their ground.

11.3 Prevention Or Cure

This research has clearly shown that it is possible to operate a mass screening of all pupils on entry to the secondary school. As shown in Chapter 9 such a screening can identify the group of pupils at particular risk of social, emotional or behavioural dysfunction. Examination of the individual scripts would identify particular areas of difficulty for particular pupils. In this way it is believed that an outcome beneficial to the pupils' educational future and overall life chances becomes more likely.

One of the key messages to come out of the preceding research is just how difficult it is to intervene in the emotional, social and behavioural well-being of adolescents once their overt behaviours have reached the point of being an obvious cause for concern to their school (chapter 10.7). It is, therefore, essential that schools do all in their power to avoid pupils reaching this position. A socially and emotionally healthy school will be one in which the school ethos and structure is conducive to the minimisation of such problems developing. Where effective preventative strategies are in place the need for additional remedial strategies should be reduced.

The Elton Report of 1989 (Discipline In Schools) was a seminal DES report on positive school and classroom practice, arguing that an examination of school practice, rather than pupil deficiencies, should be the starting point for school improvement. This report concluded that the climate within school, created by the systems in place within the school, combined with positive

home-school relationships, was the key to good pupil behaviour. Emphasis was put on everyday, proactive classroom practice such as teachers:

- Arriving before the class
- Acquiring silence in reasonable time
- Organising and maintaining seating arrangements
- Delivering well prepared lessons
- Presenting attractive and understandable materials for all levels of achievement
- Keeping everyone occupied and interested
- Extending and motivating all pupils
- Marking all work promptly
- Using a fair, clear and positive marking system
- Having regular homework patterns
- Encouraging creative dialogue
- Keeping an attractive tidy room maintaining good wall displays.

All of the above are basic tenets of good teacher training, but it is the professional experience of the author of this report that in many secondary schools they are often not put into practice.

In the fifteen years since the Elton report many other studies have elaborated on and extended its basic conclusions, but in essence they have been reinforced rather than superseded or overthrown.

Wheldall and Merrett (1992) have shown that while teachers are quick to give praise for desired academic behaviour and to voice disapproval of undesirable social behaviour, teachers hardly ever voice their approval of desirable social behaviour. Psychological theory, especially basic operant conditioning techniques (Huitt and Hummel, 1997) would dictate that teachers should be directing their positive attention towards the social behaviours they would like to see, not expecting children to behave well without the need for praise or reward while punishing or reprimanding them when they do not.

It is the conclusion of this research that the subject school relied heavily on reactive approaches to behaviour management (see Chapter 10.5) where more proactive, preventative approaches would represent the more effective form of intervention in dealing with pupils' emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It is further concluded that preventative approaches will have incalculable long-term benefits to individual pupils, the school community and to society as a whole. For this reason preventative approaches are overwhelmingly recommended as cost-effective approaches. Evidence abounds that schools that focus their primary efforts on good pastoral care systems, early and supportive interventions, give a high value to positive home-school relationships and generally adopt supportive and proactive approaches to behaviour management are much more successful in achieving good work and behaviour than those which focus their energies on managing poor behaviour and reacting to indiscipline (Cowie, Jennifer and Sharp, 2001).

An additional benefit to the school ethos of building an approach that supports the healthy emotional, social, and behavioural development of all pupils is that it avoids stigmatising individual pupils as having a problem. All pupils have the benefit of support; whether for chronic low level difficulties, occasional acute episodes or for more serious and long lasting problems. It is concluded that such a structure of primary interventions would assist in ensuring that the main focus remained providing assistance with the pupil's own difficulties, so avoiding the risk of the pupil being themselves seen as a problem for the school. Clearly this requires staff to develop and maintain an awareness of the main issues in pupils' lives, as indicated in Chapter 11.2 above, and appropriate levels of liaison with and the involvement of parents or carers.

A further conclusion arising from this research is that early intervention is more likely to be more effective in addressing issues in pupils' lives than delayed interventions. This conclusion is supported by the research carried out by St James-Roberts and Singh (2001) for the Home Office into the effectiveness of early intervention programmes for children with social and behavioural problems. They concluded that the earlier the intervention the more effective it was likely to be. Fisher (2001) goes so far as to suggest that pre-school interventions, in communities with a history of social difficulties, are too late and that support programmes should be targeted at potential parents *before* the child is born.

It is of course recognised that these conclusions would give rise to cost issues when considering the implementation of steps aimed at addressing the issues raised. It is concluded, however, that the financial costs of remedial interventions would be likely to fall as preventative approaches became effective, and the long-term benefits to pupils and society as a whole would outweigh any residual additional costs. Once again this conclusion is supported by St James-Roberts and Singh (2001) who state that, 'preventative interventions targeted at children before problems become entrenched are cost effective' (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001, p.9).

11.4 The Management Of Behavioural Issues

Chapters 10.4 and 10.5 of this work discussed the enormous amount of time and effort put into managing behaviour within the subject school. The researcher's professional experience suggests that this is likely to hold true for most comparable secondary schools (see the discussion in Chapter 1.2; The Stage At Which EBD Is Formally Recognised) and that there will be a perceived need for some explicitly punitive element to the treatment of pupils identified as having transgressed beyond certain set boundaries of behaviour. The reasons for this include:

- to satisfy teachers who feel that their working environment has been disrupted or their respect called into question,
- to satisfy governors who frequently take a retributive or authoritarian approach to behaviour management assuming that 'crime' should be matched by 'punishment' to maintain order and achieve justice,
- to set an example to other pupils,
- to ensure that the offender is fully aware of their transgression, of the consequences they will incur if they re-offend and to deter them from re-offending.

In addition some time to allow the heat of what can often be fairly acrimonious confrontations to subside is an essential part of any behaviour management strategy. Interventions attempted while passions are still enflamed are likely to be counter-productive.

It is not surprising that many schools operate a version of the hierarchical and punitive model of behaviour management in place in the subject school. It is a reflection of the behaviour management model used in society as a whole through the criminal justice system. Typically school models follow a variation on the progression from warnings, through the Behavioural Unit and on to fixed term and permanent exclusions. In the subject school, as in many other secondary schools, such a system is named, without apparent irony, a 'positive behaviour management system'.

Such a model is probably successful in meeting the first two of the four demands above. Possibly the third demand is met to a certain extent. How well they are met is beyond the scope of this work to assess. The demand that is clearly not met is that of ensuring that the miscreant is aware of the seriousness of what they have done and will avoid repeating their offence. As was described in Chapter 10.5 pupils at the subject school appeared to have only a very hazy knowledge of why they were in the Holding and Behavioural Units and re-offending was frequent. As in the wider societal model the background level of undesirable behaviour and the recidivism rate throws serious doubt on the effectiveness of this system to meet the last two aims.

The preceding argument, that pupils are often unaware of the nature of the offences they are being punished for, could be seen as the obverse of the arguments put forward in Chapter 11.2, Background Socio-Economic Considerations. Chapter 11.2 considered inter alia the research findings

(see in particular Chapter 9.6 (case studies) of how lacking in awareness of the realities of their pupils lives many of the school staff were. This chapter suggests that pupils do not understand events in the way that their teachers do, possibly because their value systems are not the same as the value systems of the staff who see them as having committed offences. It would appear that the school is one community, attempting to operate as a cohesive whole while labouring under the enormous disadvantage of a lack of internal understanding.

It is the conclusion of this work that the above stated aims of the behavioural management system are not the most appropriate in the long term. The aims set out above address the immediate containment of difficulties rather than attacking root causes, causes which might well be looked for in the findings of this research of dysfunctional levels of self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies. Assuming most schools would prefer to avoid behavioural problems, rather than respond to them, a punitive approach to discipline runs counter to psychological knowledge. As both Wheldall and Merrett (1992) and Cooper, Smith and Upton (1994) point out 'punishment' can only suppress bad behaviour in the short-term. Persistent punishment is likely to evoke dislike of the teacher and the educational establishment. This in turn can lead to a withdrawal of co-operation, contribution to lessons or even attendance. Used selectively punishment *can* help to stop bad behaviour but can never start a good one.

In the subject school various dubious strategies, such as the sleight of hand involved in the internal exclusion of the Holding and Referral Units or the illegal but common practice of suggesting pupils stay at home for a few days without an exclusion, have managed to reduce the number of recorded temporary exclusions. However, the number of permanent exclusions remains high, suggesting that problems are contained in the short term but the school-pupil relationship eventually breaks down as irrevocably as it had done before the temporary exclusion figures were massaged in the way they now are (data on temporary exclusions from unpublished school records and on permanent exclusions from as yet unpublished LEA records).

In the light of the research findings that:

- a significant number of vulnerable pupils are not currently identified through the SEN Register (Chapter 9.2 Results Of Hypothesis 2);
- the pupils in the Vulnerable Group, particularly boys, have a significantly greater perception of an external locus of control than those in the Non-Vulnerable Group do (Chapter 9.4 Results Of Hypothesis 3);
- the pupils in the Vulnerable Group tend to rely more on dysfunctional coping styles than the Non-Vulnerable Group do (Chapter 9.5 Results Of Hypothesis 4);

the likelihood is that such vulnerable pupils are among the most likely to fall into the behaviour management system at some stage in their school lives. The case study of Pupil 3 (Chapter 9.6.1) illustrates how pupils end up in the behavioural management system because they lack the emotional literacy or

range of alternate behavioural or coping strategies to manage their social interactions and lives successfully. There is nothing to suggest that the current system assists them to acquire these skills, indeed the recidivism rate strongly suggests that these pupils are no better equipped emotionally or behaviourally after their behaviour has been identified as dysfunctional than they were before.

The following points represent the principal conclusions of this work:

- There is a need for a screening programme to identify potentially vulnerable pupils at an early stage so as to inform possible future behaviour management strategies should these be required.
- There is a need to separate behavioural management issues from emotional/learning support (Chapters 10.4 and 10.5);
- There is a need to address behavioural issues from a perspective of a detailed knowledge of the pupil's overall circumstances (Chapter 11.2);
- There is a need to structure the behaviour management system to incorporate more nurturing and therapeutic approaches than punitive. (Chapters 10.4 & 10.5 evidence the inefficiency of the current system in the subject school. Chapters 4.2, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.4, 5.4.5, 5.4.6, 9.4 - 9.6, and 10.2 indicate that particularly emotionally, socially and behaviourally vulnerable adolescents [the ones most likely to be in the behaviour management system] have deficits in self-esteem, locus of control, coping strategies, social and friendship making skills);

- There is a need to reconsider the areas of focus of SEN registration, particularly with regard to the appropriateness of SEN referral for behavioural issues, in order to reduce the risk of SEN referral being seen by pupils as a punishment;
- There is a need for pupils (and parents) to understand clearly the reasons for behavioural management interventions, so as to empower them to take ownership of the behaviours and the capacity to change them (11.2);
- There is a need for pupils to have assistance with developing the skills or strategies to avoid repeating the unacceptable behaviours;
- There is a need for staff to be aware of - and understand - any psychological, emotional or behavioural reason why the pupil does not use skills or strategies to address behavioural issues;
- There is a need for pupils to receive assistance in developing or accessing any therapeutic interventions or skill development programmes that might assist in addressing behavioural issues;
- There is a need for schools to seek to facilitate the development of social and friendship skills. (Chapters 4.2 and 9.6 [case studies] suggest the significance of friendships and social interactions in healthy development. This is a reciprocal relationship);
- It would be appropriate for schools to seek to provide pupils with assistance in using time productively (lunch times, out of school, life in general). (Case studies (Chapter 9.6)) suggest that a lack of productive and positive activity is linked to social dysfunction. Locus of Control

research (Chapters 5.4.5 and 9.4) suggested that a belief that shaping one's own life was not possible led to less desirable outcomes);

- It would be appropriate for schools to run groups on a range of issues to develop self-efficacy. (Chapters 5.4.6 and 9.5 evidence the need for a greater range of coping strategies in many young people, particularly the most vulnerable to social, emotional and behavioural dysfunction).

11.5 The Management Of Emotional And Behavioural Issues

Schools are social communities and during their years at school children are involved in highly complex social interactions on many levels and in many registers. Through these interactions pupils are:

- observing and responding to role models
- acting as role models to others
- rehearsing and refining their social, emotional and behavioural skills
- developing their social value systems and discriminatory criteria
- generally establishing their identities and self-image.

Through surviving the cut-and-thrust of these interactions adolescents skill themselves up for the interactions of adulthood.

When things go wrong for young people; socially, emotionally or behaviourally; it is highly likely that these problems relate to their social interactions. The variety of difficulties with social experiences that children face, and the approaches and interventions that can be used to help ameliorate those difficulties, is legion (Schneider, Rubin and Lendigham 1985). Extrapolating from the findings of the action research conducted as part of this work it is reasonable to assume that many secondary schools contain a sizeable community of pupils, such as the Vulnerable Group in this research, whose self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies, when compared to those of the Non-Vulnerable Group, suggest unresolved emotional issues likely to impact upon their social, emotional and

behavioural well being. As in the subject school, where only one pupil was officially recognised and supported for emotional difficulties, it is also reasonable to assume that many of these vulnerable pupils' vulnerabilities go unrecognised and unsupported.

It is concluded, therefore, that three broad approaches - loosely based on three different perceived loci of difficulty, each linked to a different theoretical paradigm - should be considered:

- A Behavioural Approach

  This approach emphasises the child's learning of behaviours and social knowledge, and so offers the possibility to relearn and modify these behaviours. Solomon and Wahler (1973) found that the peers of children with friendship problems tended to focus on the child's negative behaviours and ignore the positive behaviour. This had the vicious circle effect of reinforcing, and so perpetuating, the negative behaviours. A behavioural approach would assume that the responses of the child's peers were teaching the child how to behave. To break this learning pattern the peers would need to be encouraged to recognise and respond to the child's positive social behaviours and the child would need to learn to increase these positive social behaviours in order to receive the desirable reaction. Thus a behaviourist approach might well concentrate on the child through guidance, instruction and reinforcement, and adult and peer models (Combs and Slaby 1977), and concentrate on

the group through one of numerous group therapy techniques (Wilson & Hersov, 1985).

The behavioural approach should emphasise the objective definition of a problem and provide measurable procedures to address it. This in its turn should allow the unequivocal evaluation of the success or otherwise of any intervention put into place to address this problem. In practice the complexity of human relationships and the plethora of implicated factors means that such scientific rigour and certitude is not usually possible but attempts should be made to reach this ideal as far as possible.

The behavioural approach is felt to be best suited to children with specific, identifiable behavioural deficits that are causing them distress or likely to lead to risk situations, although identifying such children is no easy task (Ladd and Asher, 1985). Pupils deemed to have basic social skill deficits could be supported particularly usefully through this approach using well-established strategies such as an adapted Circle of Friends (Taylor, 1996) run and evaluated by skilled LSAs or Learning Mentors.

Although behaviourism is often viewed as the most effective approach, and is certainly the dominant approach for the teaching of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Herbert, 1991), it does have its weaknesses. Behaviourism focuses on controlling the symptoms rather than seeking to understand the root causes of the behaviours it seeks to

change. Such an approach, it could be argued, might leave the root cause of the difficulty unaffected (Huitt, 2001). Evidence suggests, whether consciously or not, that the behavioural approach is the one adopted by the subject school (Chapter 10.5)

- A Cognitive Approach

This approach focuses on altering the way the child thinks about people and social situations and teaching more adaptive perspectives for the child to adopt. The assumption behind such an approach is that overt behaviour is mediated by cognitive processes and so to alter the overt behaviour one first needs to alter the cognitive processes. This approach has the potential to be more powerful than the behavioural approach in that by operating at a deeper level it should allow for a more general application and a more fundamental adjustment in the child. The assumption is that as a child increases their understanding of the causes and consequences of behaviour, incorporating into their understanding considerations such as that unacceptable behaviour does not necessarily make a person unacceptable, they will be able to make the appropriate social adjustment (Smith, 2002).

This approach could be incorporated into a school's support programme for pupils with social skill or friendship problems as one-to-one work with a Learning Mentor or through PHSE lessons. There would be considerations about the experience, skills and qualifications of the

facilitator undertaking such work but this should not be beyond the capabilities of an appropriately supported Learning Mentor (Gourley, 1999; Searle and Streng, 1996).

- A Systems Approach

This approach looks not so much at the child and his or her role in the situation as the key, but more to the school situation or system that the child is operating within. Such an approach recognises that there is no such thing as social behaviour outside a social context. For any therapy to be judged successful the child must be able to operate in the real world at a better level than they did previously, not just to have better social skills in a contrived or sheltered situation.

Just as the behavioural approach can be said to be best suited to children with specific, identifiable behavioural or social deficits, so the systems approach can be said to have a group of 'best fit'. Certain vulnerable groups of children can be seen to have specific difficulties when expected to interact socially in the average mainstream classroom, for reasons that they can not alter. Such children might be the physically atypical, children with autistic spectrum disorder or Down syndrome, or some other factor that puts them in a minority within their environment. In these cases, whilst cognitive and behavioural work with the pupil, and its community, might be a useful strategy, consideration might be given to altering the structure of the community itself.

Gottlieb (1971) found that increased contact with 'retarded' (sic) children, in a working situation as opposed to a social situation, can actually increase their rejection as potential friends. This is much less evident if the interaction is more equal such as in situations when they are not so overtly handicapped by their difficulties. Knowledge of this sort could inform the structure of the communities children operate within and has implications for the streaming of pupils and for time tables.

It is concluded that the implementation of any of these approaches would, as above, require a sound knowledge of the pupils as 'whole individuals', extended transitional arrangements (see also Chapter 11.7 below), and the early screening and identification of vulnerable pupils. It is further concluded that:

- Consideration and support of the friendship and general social skills of the pupils would be extremely beneficial to the smooth running of the school, the happiness of the pupils and the later successful adult lives of these pupils;
- Efforts to support and enhance pupils' self-esteem through the identification of roles of responsibility they could assume – buddies, role models, advisors etc. – would provide benefits to the pupils and the wider school and social community. (Chapter 5.4.4 identified the need to develop self-esteem);
- Skilled adult support and assistance should be provided to young people to assist them to make sense of sometimes confusing social and

emotional lives. (Chapter 9.6 [Case Studies] suggested complicated lives for many pupils and a lack of any one strong adult relationship to depend upon);

- There are benefits from the establishment of a system of mentoring – not restricted solely to SEN registered or other pupils identified as emotionally or socially vulnerable – to provide assistance with aspects such as the productive use of time (lunch times, out of school, life in general), the development of self-efficacy, friendship styles, and the development of personal potency;
- Parental involvement is essential in order to both understand and address issues arising, subject also to the acknowledged need for sensitivity and discretion.

11.6 The Management Of Learning Issues

In a young person, expected to spend much of their time in an educational establishment, psychological health can not be separated from educational progress. This is not to say that educational progress, much less any specified rate of progress, is necessary for sound psychological health. More, that the way the young person's educational progress is managed and approached, both by themselves and by others, will be of prime importance in the development of that person's academic self-esteem and psychological health. It is concluded, therefore, that young people should be given every assistance to develop a functional learning style most appropriate to their personality and needs.

This research has established a link between psychological constructs such as self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies on the one hand and academic outcomes on the other (Chapter 5.4.3). The findings of Hypothesis 2, that a significant proportion of the pupils in the Vulnerable Group had not been included on the SEN Register for emotional and behavioural difficulties and so is not officially recognised as having emotional needs at a level that needed a school response suggests that many pupils not fulfilling their academic potentials go unrecognised by the school system.

Chapter 5 of this work explored the various theories around self-esteem, perceived locus of control and coping strategies. Chapters 5.4.4, 5.4.5 and 5.4 introduced Carol Dweck's research into entity theorists and incremental

theorists; research which linked an individual's academic self-esteem and perceived locus of control over their academic progress to their understanding of their intelligence. These two cognitive perspectives (entity and incremental theories) directly inform the individual's belief in the nature of their intelligence, the extent of any control they might have over their academic progress and successes and so the learning style they adopt.

Traditionally most educational programmes devised to support pupils with learning difficulties have fitted well with an entity theory of intelligence. Such programmes emphasise a small step approach from a level well within the pupil's ability to succeed, affording much opportunity for repetition and over-learning, and increasing in almost imperceptible steps so that the pupil is always working well within their ability range. They incorporate extremely generous reward and praise schedules. Frequently they are delivered in a small group setting to pupils of similar ability. The rationale behind such an approach is that pupils who have spent many years struggling with an inadequately differentiated curriculum alongside pupils who appear more able than they feel themselves to be will have had their academic self-esteem badly damaged by repeated experiences of failure. They will have learned that they are not the sort of people who can succeed at academic tasks (see Chapter 5.4.5, self-efficacy belief) and so the effort they will be prepared to put in to what they see as a futile task will be greatly reduced. It has been assumed that by allowing for frequent opportunities to experience success their self-efficacy belief will improve and as a result they will start to view themselves as having the ability to succeed. This in turn

should allow them to start to exert some control over their learning as they strive for something they now imagine to be within their grasp. This approach is almost universally accepted as good practice among educationalists and incorporated into the IEPs of most pupils with any degree of specific or general learning difficulty.

Such an approach is underpinned by a great deal of psychological and empirical research. Experience shows that, given sensitive enough planning and consistent and sustained delivery (not always easily achieved in reality), it is effective with a great many pupils. There always remain however a core of pupils who appear to have had their learning profile appropriately assessed and a learning programme devised and delivered using this 'opportunities for success' method over an extended period, but who still fail to make progress or to engage with their learning. Additionally there are pupils who, when offered this 'opportunities for success' method start to make progress but then seem to reach a plateau beyond which they can not move.

Dweck's theories provide a useful framework from within which to understand why some pupils appear not to respond positively to experiencing success and praise so readily as others do. Additionally it suggests that even for those pupils who do make positive progress with the help of such a programme, this approach alone might not be in the pupils' best long-term interest.

On this basis it is possible to argue that pupils who have failed to make academic progress over a number of years are likely to fall into the entity theorist group. Dweck argued that pupils who adopt an entity theory approach to their ability are likely to avoid valuable learning opportunities if they fear they might reveal inadequacies, entail errors or pose obstacles. Thus, to continue with such a programme, giving pupils easy success and plentiful praise, does not foster a 'hardy, can-do mentality'. On the contrary it further entrenches the entity theory of the pupils' ability with all the over concern with 'looking smart, a distaste for challenge and a decreased ability to cope with set backs'. Dweck preferred to promote what she described as the incremental theory of intelligence as the most likely to lead to a successful academic outcome (Dweck, 2000). As discussed in Chapter 5, people who hold this theory are likely to seek out more active opportunities to solve problems for themselves, looking for challenges and chances to increase their skill base.

Dweck's research was primarily focussed on young adults rather than on early adolescents. Once established, self-esteem is believed to remain fairly constant throughout adult life, broadly returning to some homeostatically controlled level after environmentally provoked peaks or troughs (Battle, 1992, see Chapter 5.4.4). However, during the years of childhood and adolescence self-esteem is far from stable. These are the years when the homeostatically controlled level is believed to be set, environmental and experiential factors working on genetic determinants. As found in Chapter 5.4.4 early adolescence, when self-esteem is at its most malleable, would be

the ideal time to focus educational support on moving pupils towards a more incremental theory of their own ability and capacity to extend this ability.

In the early stages of re-engaging pupils with their studies and bolstering their self-efficacy belief the traditional small-step with opportunities to experience frequent success programme is still likely to remain the most appropriate. However, it is the conclusion of this work that such an approach militates against the promotion of mastery-orientated qualities in pupils. In the long run it is likely to discourage pupils from maximising their educational potential by bolstering their belief in an invisible limitation to their potential.

When pupils have been failing to make progress for some time it is tempting for teachers to be thrilled when they start to make some progress, without asking how closely this progress matches their educational potential or whether this potential is now being fulfilled. As informed by Dweck's research, however, and as discussed in Chapter 10.6 above, it is concluded that the pupil whose educational support allows them to make 'satisfactory' progress is only likely to become an active learner, to maximise their potential and to acquire learning skills and approaches which will benefit them throughout their life once they have adopted an incremental theory to their ability and thus become more of a self-motivated learner.

The move from the 'easy success' model to a more challenging approach might well be quite unnerving for already educationally vulnerable pupils. It

is concluded, therefore, that an easy way in for the pupil, although requiring individual attention from the teaching staff, would be to discover an existing pocket of strength or confidence in the pupil's learning profile and start with challenges in that area, where their self-esteem is likely to be highest. Almost all pupils will have some strengths or interests.

Against that background, therefore, it is further concluded that:

- The development of differentiated approaches to learning needs support, incorporating incremental theory-based interventions alongside the traditional approach, will assist a broader range of those experiencing learning difficulties than interventions based solely on the traditional approach;
- There is a need to seek to raise the appreciation of educational value in the parent community, for example through the development of numerous community – school links (see Chapter 10.2 Relative Self-Esteem and the findings on low academic self-esteem);
- Transitional arrangements should seek to identify any learning related issues before the child accesses the secondary school, in order to allow for the appropriate involvement of parents or carers and other parties;
- The prime focus of SEN registration should be the support of learning needs.

11.7 The Learning Environment

Chapters 2.2.2, 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 have explored the fragmented and often conflicting messages that an adolescent needs to absorb and integrate in order to function effectively. Some of the tension and conflict experienced by young people could be reduced if some of the worlds they inhabit could be seen as complementary in their approaches and in the messages they give out.

Secondary schools could go a long way towards assisting the young people they receive in Year 7. These young people should be helped to view their receiving school, not as yet one more strange and confusing establishment with a new set of emotional demands and behavioural expectations but as an extension of the communities they are already familiar with; their homes and their primary schools.

Most pyramids of schools, including the pyramid that the subject school forms part of, already have transitional programmes in place to support the move from Year 6 in the primary school to Year 7 in the secondary school. The Government's Green Paper, Proposals For Primary Education, sets out a clear set of targets for improving the transition to secondary school (DfEE,2001, 3.41 – 3.46) Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs have this transitional programme more formally recognised in law through the provisions of the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). Despite this it

is a conclusion of this research that there is still much to be done to build on this transitional programme for all pupils.

Several large scale research projects in recent years support this conclusion. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the experience of school transfer and the continuity experienced by the pupils at that time. In particular their focus was on the extent to which the National Curriculum, with its attendant assessment and pedagogical initiatives, had affected educational practice and pupil performance.

As with other research in this area (Galton, Morrison and Pell, 2000; Waldon, 2000) Hargreaves and Galton found a considerable dip in the educational attainment of pupils during their first year after transition, although pupils tended to keep their educational ranking within the class, suggesting that this phenomenon was common to all pupils and no particular groups were disproportionately vulnerable to it.

In the light of the present study, Hargreaves and Galton's findings on pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil interactions were particularly interesting. They noted that pre-transfer girls gave making new friends as their most important concern relating to transfer while boys ranked making new friends third on their list of concerns, after academic demands and opportunities for sport and P.E. Post-transfer these concerns about friendships remained large in pupils' minds. Once in the secondary school they found that pupils had fewer opportunities for pupil interaction and thus fewer opportunities for

friendship formation, peer-learning or peer-mentoring. Teaching style and classroom organisation (seating arrangements) were such that pupils engaged much less in group or collaborative work in Year 7 than they had in Year 6 and almost entirely on individual learning. Pupils were also less likely to try to begin or succeed in initiating conversations. Overall pupil-pupil talk was reduced by 10 per cent when expressed as a proportion of all observed classroom interactions. When pupils did begin a verbal exchange these were unlikely to be maintained for more than 25 seconds. This was found to be the case for all pupil-pupil interactions including those that were task-related.

This same research found that teachers spent much less time interacting with individual pupils or groups of pupils in the secondary school than pupils had experienced in the primary school. Pupils who were on task were highly unlikely to attract the teachers' attention, which was predominantly focussed on off-task or distracted behaviour. Boys were more likely to attract the teachers' attention when they distracted others and girls when they showed an interest in another's work or when they were daydreaming.

The present research took a 'snap shot' picture of self-esteem for one cohort of pupils at the start of Year 7. There were no base lines to measure the individual pupils against other than the standardised norms established by the measuring tool. Hargreaves and Galton's longitudinal study took pre- and post-transfer measures of self-esteem and, interestingly in the light of the findings of the present research, found a rise in the pupil's general

self-esteem on transfer. This was more marked in the boys than the girls and most marked in the lower attaining boys. This last fact was ascribed to the possible effect of lower attaining boys becoming part of a counter-culture within the secondary school. The researcher's professional experience is of encountering children in Year 6 of primary school who feel isolated as perhaps the only non-reader in their class of 30 children but who on moving to secondary school take comfort from finding themselves in a set with maybe ten other non-readers.

One implication of Hargreaves and Galton's work for the present study is that the general self-esteem for the subject population, which was found to be low when compared with the standardised norms, might have been even lower in the year prior to the screening which took place as part of this research. This can not, of course, be proved but it remains a possibility.

For the majority of the pupils in Hargreaves and Galton's study academic self-esteem hardly changed. A worrying finding was the growing disenchantment of all pupils across the range with the experience of secondary school. From initial trepidation about the academic demands, tinged with excitement pupils tended to move to a more disengaged position. In contrast to their replies in Year 6, few pupils described themselves as excited or stimulated by the school or learning experience. The highest attaining boys showed the biggest decline in positive attitudes to school and their motivation to learn. There were significant suggestions of disaffection and demotivation in these higher attaining boys once they reached their

secondary schools and initial gains in self-image were not maintained. This demotivation was seen as the result of the non-interactive whole-class teaching the pupils received in secondary schools compared with the primary school experience.

This section started with a discussion about the need to reduce the number of different and conflicting worlds the child is asked to adapt to and inhabit at the time of transition. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to have even more complex lives at this time than the majority community do, as they move between different cultural worlds at home and at school. Graham and Hill (2003) contend that such children can feel particularly disadvantaged at this time and advise that particular attention is given to their situation in the planning of transition programmes.

Based on the case studies that form part of the action research of this work (Chapter 9.6) and supported by research studies such as those of Hargreaves and Galton (2002) and Graham and Hill (2003), discussed above, it is concluded that the overall effectiveness of any transition programme would be considerably enhanced it if incorporated, or was established alongside school policies that:

- Facilitate the development of a system whereby staff could take a more holistic approach, have time to understand the pupils as individuals and to liaise with a wide range of other agencies as appropriate to individual

pupils' needs; this would be extremely advantageous to the pupil, their education and the smooth running of the school;

- Provide an opportunity for the professional development of school staff, offering increased staff appreciation of the range of factors that impact on their pupils' ability to function successfully at school and the importance of addressing difficulties (see also Chapter 10.8);
- Assist in increasing staff awareness of many issues in pupils' lives of relevance to their functioning in school and therefore the ability to target interventions appropriately;
- Assist in raising the appreciation of the value of education in the parent community through the establishment and nurturing of numerous community – school links;
- Facilitate the development of pupils' self-efficacy beliefs, social and friendship skills;
- Provide for generally available mentoring, especially – but not solely – at the time of transition from the primary to the secondary school environment;
- Provide SEN and other appropriately targeted support across the full range of behavioural, emotional, social and learning difficulties.

Above all, it is concluded that the current narrow view as to the purpose of education should be reconsidered. Assessing education as the acquisition of academic standards and skills directly relevant to the world of work, rather than on qualitative outcomes and general life skills is not in the overall best interests of the pupils or of society as a whole. It is therefore concluded that

a wide ranging re-examination of the overall purpose of education is essential, in order to identify and agree upon the desired outcomes. This should enable the learning environment to be arranged and structured in the best way possible to achieve those aims.

CHAPTER 12 : RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

12.1 Academic Findings Versus Practical Interventions; Caveats And Cautions

In drawing conclusions and recommendations from the preceding research it is recognised that there will always be a tension between the purely academic conclusions indicated by the research and the reality of the situation most secondary schools find themselves in. Many of the following recommendations have staffing and funding implications that would stretch most school budgets to the extreme. In addition schools have many, sometimes conflicting, priorities to balance and a range of different statutory obligations and social expectations to meet.

In the face of this recognition it is still strongly contended that it is the duty of those involved in academic research to produce conclusions and recommendations based on that research even if such conclusions and recommendations might appear unrealistic in the face of the current economic and political climate. Such conclusions and recommendations are appropriate as contributions to the wider debate that should be ongoing in society. A healthy society, capable of both evolving in the face of social change and leading such change for the betterment of its members needs vigorous, open and transparent debate where all educational possibilities are considered. Such debate should include challenging consideration of the

potential of education, its intended purpose in society, and the means by which it can achieve this purpose.

The approach adopted in this chapter is to offer the following recommendations, drawn directly from the research findings and conclusions both as a contribution to wider national debate and in the hope that individual schools will be able to draw on these recommendations in the light of their own peculiar situations.

Many of these recommendations have been discussed with Head Teachers, senior school staff and LEA officers both at the subject school and more widely. Some of the points raised during these discussions and the factors that might limit their implementation are included at the end of this chapter.

12.2 Preventative Approaches And Early Interventions

Wherever possible it is recommended that a preventative approach should be adopted, rather than a remedial approach. It is recognised that such approaches are likely to incur initial, up-front costs in terms of financing, staffing and effort for the school. On occasions the justification for these costs, in the absence of obvious need at the time, might be harder than the justification for such cost in the face of pupils whose behaviour has passed the point of being acceptable.

Schools are only one factor in the healthy development of adolescents and no matter how effective the preventative approaches are there will always remain a core of pupils whose vulnerability is such (whether for within-child, broader community or other reasons) that they will require additionally tailored support programmes. For this reason it is advised that schools implement a two pronged approach to the psychological well-being of their pupils; a well-structured and positive system that supports all pupils and a more specific programme targeted at particular individuals identified as having a peculiar susceptibility to dysfunction.

The present research demonstrates the potential for a mass screening programme, implemented as the new intake of pupils arrive in Year 7, to identify a potentially vulnerable group of pupils and to assist in the efficient targeting of resources.

12.3 Transitional Programmes

It has been acknowledged above in Chapter 11.7 that most pyramids of schools already have transitional programmes in place to support the move from Year 6 in the primary school to Year 7 in the secondary school. Hypotheses 1 and 2 of this research proposed that a body of pupils exists who exhibit significantly low self-esteem (the vulnerable group) and that a significant proportion of this vulnerable group will not be found on the SEN register. This suggests that those systems currently in place to support the transition of pupils from one school to the other do not adequately identify the vulnerable pupils to the receiving staff. Based on the findings of hypotheses 1 and 2, it is a recommendation of this research that there is still much to be done to build on this transitional programme for all pupils.

The aims of the Transitional Programme should be:

- To make the buildings, staff, facilities, pupils and experience of operating as part of a much larger community than they are used to familiar and 'safe' to the new intake of pupils before they arrive;
- To bolster the self-esteem of Year 7 pupils through the assumption of roles of responsibility;
- To familiarise secondary school staff with the individual circumstances and profiles of the new intake of pupils;
- To contribute to the secondary school staff's continuing professional development in meeting the pastoral and emotional needs of their pupils;

- To identify pupils who are already experiencing emotional, social, behavioural or learning difficulties that will need to supporting;
- To identify pupils who might experience particular difficulty at transition.

In order to meet those aims the following points are offered for consideration.

- A floating member of staff should be appointed to oversee a three-year transitional programme covering National Curriculum Years 5, 6 and 7. This staff member could be a senior member of staff with the status of a Head of Year, could have teaching or non-teaching assistants working with them and could be jointly funded between the secondary school and the various primary schools that feed into it. Joint funding would have the benefit of emphasising that the transitional programme is not owned by the secondary school but is the responsibility of both primary and secondary schools jointly.

- During the proposed three-year transitional period for all pupils there should be free movement of pupils between the various establishments. Year 7 pupils should have frequent returns to their old primary schools where they could act as mentors and befrienders to the Year 5 and 6 pupils. Years 5 and 6 should have opportunities to become familiar with their peers in their sister schools and should visit the secondary school frequently. Visits from Years 5 and 6 to the secondary school should

follow exercises familiarising them with the geography of the buildings through maps, quizzes and jigsaw games of the building. Initial visits should take place when the building is relatively free of other pupils and they can become familiar with the geography of what is likely to be a physically daunting building. This contact should increase until the pupils are accessing the secondary school at the height of its hustle and bustle.

- Year 5 and 6 pupils should have numerous opportunities to discuss their impending transfer to familiarise themselves with the thought and to give them opportunities to talk through any areas of concern.

- A range of activities should be permanently on offer as part of the encouragement of inter-school links. The up-take of such activities should be monitored and strategies put in place to facilitate their up-take by all pupils and to ensure that the experiences remain positive.

Suggested activities include:

- Book clubs held in the secondary school library with guest readers and literary activities
- Year 7 'reading buddies' to work on shared reading with Year 5 and 6 pupils
- Inter-Primary school sporting fixtures, perhaps refereed by Year 7 pupils
- IT opportunities
- Fancy dress events themed around a history topic

- Taster lessons in the secondary school
- Shared creative and general social activities

- Secondary school staff should take occasional lessons in the primary schools. This will allow pupils to become familiar with such staff and with the concept of specialist teaching. It will also allow the secondary school staff to become familiar with their future pupils. Additionally it will afford significant in-service training opportunities for secondary specialist subject teachers to develop their teaching and classroom management skills. In collaboration with their primary colleagues they will experience the more inclusive, child-centred, class-based and nurturing approaches of the primary school with the everyday acceptance of pastoral responsibility and of differentiating material to a full range of social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs that a primary school teacher has.

- An effective transitional programme should involve the parents or carers of pupils as far as possible. Formalised occasions for such involvement such as through IEP reviews, parents' evenings, transitional interviews etc. all offer good opportunities for such involvement but inevitably involve the same group of parents each time. The member of staff responsible for the Transitional Programme should use effective monitoring of up-take and knowledge of local circumstances to ensure as near to 100 per cent up-take as possible. Strategies to consider to

extend parental involvement in their child's transitional programme and general educational progress include:

- Initial meetings for the parents of Year 5 pupils held at the primary schools and attended by secondary school staff at the widest level: teachers, school nurse, Welfare Officer, Learning Mentors etc.
- Home visits where appropriate
- Social and cultural events for parents held between establishments
- Regular updates through news letters or even a Transitional Programme regular magazine
- A 'taster day' for parents and carers at the secondary school where they can sample lessons, lunch or other school experiences and resources
- Adult literacy, IT or other out-of-hours classes for the parents of Years 5 and 6 pupils held at the secondary school
- A community social programme encouraging wider families and the community in the catchment area to attend weekend and holiday time events in the secondary school
- School uniform and resource sales, possibly assisted/sponsored by local businesses, for the parents of Year 5, 6 and 7 pupils held in the secondary school
- Invitations to attend concerts put on by combined Year 5, 6 and 7 pupils.

The above recommendations all assume a straight line transition from a known group of feeder schools into a single secondary school. In reality most pyramids of schools have individual children, or sometimes sizeable groups of children, who move out of the pyramid on leaving the primary stage of their education and similarly pupils who join the secondary school from out-of-pyramid primary schools. School staff and parents will still be able to adapt and benefit from the above recommendations providing decisions about secondary schools are made in good time, such decisions communicated clearly and liaison between all parties is good.

12.4 The Extended Use Of Learning Mentors Or LSAs

Under DfES guidelines and provisions most secondary schools now offer some kind of Learning Mentor scheme to their pupils. There seems to be little consistency between schools in the exact form that this takes but it is invariably a limited resource, offered to identified pupils, often after specific concerns have been raised and for a specified period of time.

Hypotheses 1, 3, 4 and 6 proposed, and in testing them it was found, that a significant number of pupils would start their secondary school careers with low self-esteem, a greater perception of an external locus of control in their lives, a greater reliance on dysfunctional styles of coping and be more likely to identify themselves as unhappy with themselves than their non-vulnerable peers did. These are all areas where interventions could be put in place by suitably skilled Learning Mentors. Based on the findings of hypotheses 1, 3, 4 and 6 it is a recommendation of this research that the Learning Mentor scheme is greatly increased to include a much wider and less formal service to pupils. Careful consideration would need to be given to staffing qualifications and training and it is recognised that these issues, as well as funding, might cause difficulties in many schools. Such an expanded service could encompass:

- A drop-in counselling service.

- Teaching and facilitating functional lunch and break time activities such as playground games or constructive use of the quiet areas. These activities could focus on facilitating an inclusive approach among the pupils.

- Running pre-school clubs. These can encourage punctuality and attendance where that is a problem and assist those pupils who need to leave their homes earlier than normal. They also give an opportunity for mentors to talk to pupils before the more pressured time-table starts. The exact nature could depend on local circumstances but breakfast clubs and Brain Gym sessions could be considered.

- Self-referral or by invitation groups dealing with particular issues such as:
    - Anger management
    - Friendship skills
    - Planning and using leisure time
    - Homework clubs (often accessed by the lonely)
    - Grief counselling
    - Self-efficacy and coping skills
    - Study skills

Such groups should be advertised widely and accessing them characterised as intelligent self-management on a par with accessing swimming or football coaching. They should not be seen by the pupil community as a provision for pupils identified as failing in some way. If held at lunch or break times

they could serve the dual purpose of giving productive activity at those unstructured times to pupils who might otherwise find such times difficult.

12.5 Supporting Social Relationships

As found in Chapter 11.5, schools are social communities and during their years at school children are involved in highly complex social interactions on many levels and in many registers. The findings of hypothesis 6 of this research suggest that pupils are joining the subject school who identify themselves as unhappy with their lives and friendships. The findings of hypothesis 2 indicated that such young people were not easily recognised as needing help by school staff. In seeking to assist such young people to manage the cut-and-thrust of their social interactions it is recommended that schools make use of all three of the broad approaches outlined in Chapter 11.5 (behavioural, cognitive, systems) in order to provide a comprehensive approach.

In implementing a behavioural approach it is recommended that schools make use of techniques aimed at involving peer groups in teaching one another how to behave. This would involve guidance, instruction and reinforcement, adult and peer models, and appropriate 'group therapy techniques' such as Circle of Friends (Taylor, 1996), run and evaluated by skilled LSAs or Learning Mentors. The behavioural approach should emphasise the objective definition of a problem and provide measurable procedures to address it, and is felt to be best suited to children with specific, identifiable behavioural deficits that are causing them distress or likely to lead to risk situations.

As regards a cognitive approach it is recommended that this be incorporated into school's support programme for pupils with social skill or friendship problems as one-to-one work with a Learning Mentor or through PHSE lessons. There would be considerations about the experience, skills and qualifications of the facilitator undertaking such work but this should not be beyond the capabilities of an appropriately supported Learning Mentor.

To achieve a systems approach to the support of social relationships it is recommended that attention be directed towards aspects such as the structure of school communities, streaming policies and time tables. One practical application of this approach that would be appropriate in many secondary schools would be in the support of pupils with physical difficulties, particularly non-ambulatory pupils. Most schools include such pupils completely in their formal lesson times. The less structured times of the day such as playtimes, lunch times, moving between rooms, free periods for older pupils or form periods are frequently used to attend to physical needs or for ease of management such pupils are physically segregated from their peers. These are the very times during the day when social interactions take place and friendships are formed. Such pupils are seriously disadvantaged in their emotional, social and behavioural development by missing such opportunities.

In reality the above three approaches are not mutually exclusive but often can be usefully employed together; with some situations depending more

heavily on one approach and others on another. The behavioural approach and the cognitive approach can be viewed together as complementary; one being a bottom-up strategy and the other a top-down strategy. Both could be implemented in schools by the same competent non-teaching staff. It is reasonable to hope that following either approach both cognitive processes and behaviours will alter; it is more a question of which one leads and which one follows. Systems approaches, while ideal for supporting the atypical child, provide a useful perspective for whole school policy.

Additionally fairly simple strategies such as facilitating improvements in pupils' personal hygiene and grooming can reap great rewards in terms of their consequent social interactions. Such work could be incorporated into the responsibilities of a Learning Mentor.

12.6 Targeted Strategies

It is the recommendation of this research that screening for early signs of vulnerability is put in place, focussing on the three identified indices of vulnerability; self-esteem, locus of control and coping strategies. The whole process should use very little school time and the dynamic assessment nature of some of the tools used further validates the use of such time as is necessary. The administration of the screening tools can take place in a form period or PSE lesson. The use of appropriate marking templates means that the scripts could be marked by a competent clerical assistant. Further research could usefully be undertaken into the feasibility of moving this screening to Year 5 or 6 as part of the pupils' transitional programme.

As with all psychometric screening the objectivity offered by a standardised tool must be balanced against the recognised limitations of psychometrics. The ambiguities surrounding the results of Pupil 4 in this research bears testimony the potential problems of such approaches. Only a 'snap shot' picture of the individual can be gained in this way and it is important that the results of this screening do not lead to identifying temporary swings in psychological health as indicators of chronic clinical dysfunction. It is also essential that the results of such screening are treated with the utmost sensitivity and used purely to support the potentially vulnerable, not to label pupils as dysfunctional or to identify pupils as part of a more punitive approach. To ensure that such good intentions do not degenerate as the system becomes familiar it is recommended that a psychologist or similar

external professional continues to have oversight of the process. If this is kept at the level of pure oversight it would use very little psychologist time. Should particular circumstances dictate, under such supervision, particular modifications of the assessment or interpretation of the results could be instituted.

It is recommended that the results of the above screening be used as a core part of the identification of pupils to whom individually tailored support could be offered. Further factors to be considered in identifying pupils for targeted support could include:

- reports from feeder schools
- information gathered during the Transitional Programme
- self-referral; this recognises the subjective and experiential nature of vulnerability
- poor attendance or punctuality; these are often an early indicator of emotional or social problems
- Referral from other agencies such as Education Welfare Officers, School Nurses, Pastoral or Year Heads etc.

Pupils identified at this stage should be given a pastoral interview where their situation can be discussed and the possibility of support presented in a positive and sensitive manner. All adolescents would probably benefit from some pastoral guidance and emotional support and in prioritising those to be offered help their willingness to attend must be an important consideration. Once pupils have been identified as potentially vulnerable their initial refusal

to access support must not cut them off from such a programme forever. They could be offered a series of follow-up interviews at half-termly intervals when their progress and support could be reviewed.

Once a group of pupils has been identified the support they are offered should be tailored to their perceived need and circumstances. Information gathered from the mass screening might well provide suggestions for particular areas of weakness to be addressed. Confident and experienced staff might choose to write their own specifically tailored programmes. Where this is not the case many proprietary programmes aimed at increasing pupils' feelings of self-efficacy and their confidence in using a range of coping strategies exist.

It is recommended wherever possible that any such programmes seek to identify and build on existing strengths in order to address any identified areas of weakness or vulnerability. The exact nature of this programme would depend upon the strengths of the children and the needs of the school community but examples could be:

- Providing pupils with opportunities to act as mentors or role models to others, or giving them particular responsibilities;

- Linking the Year 7 pupils with pupils from the feeder schools identified as likely to experience difficulties on transition to the Secondary School, so

enabling these pupils to work together on a mentoring or 'buddy' approach throughout the year prior to transfer;

- Running social opportunities as a standard part of the Transitional Programme (cycling proficiency schemes, football coaching);

- Assisting younger or learning disabled pupils with basic educational or social tasks;

- Working on community projects linking the school to identified community groups such as the elderly;

- Acting as befrienders to pupils who feel they have no friends;

- Becoming monitors and advisors for some educational resource such as the library, computer software or art equipment;

- Responsibility for wild or nature areas in the school grounds or particular patches of garden;

- Traditional cognitive, frequently paper, role play or discussion based self-esteem raising exercises.

It is seen as axiomatic that pupils identified as vulnerable to social, emotional or behavioural dysfunction have such identification kept in confidence.

Without their fully informed consent this identification should not be revealed to other pupils, their parents or any wider community within the school than is necessary for their support. Inclusion in support programmes should not compromise such confidentiality.

In order to monitor the efficacy of support for individual pupils, to adjust the programme as necessary and to make provision for the continued support of the pupils, re-testing using the same battery of psychometric tools in Years 10 or 11 could be considered. Thus it is important that any self-esteem support programmes such as those proposed above are fully integrated into whole-school programmes involving all pupils, so as to ensure that the involvement of vulnerable pupils does not mark them out inappropriately.

12.7 Managing Behavioural Problems

The conclusions of this research, set out in Chapters 11.4 and 11.5, lead to the strong recommendation that the whole approach to behaviour and emotional management in schools is reviewed, taking into consideration the following points:

1. The immediate, medium and long-term aims of the behavioural management system. This is a matter for the whole school community, under the guidance and direction of the Governors and SMT. Consultation should be as wide as possible and should include:

- The statutory framework and government advice
- LEA policy and advice including the views of Educational Psychologists, Welfare Officers, Behavioural Team, Social Inclusion Team, Paediatric Services etc.
- The views of pupils
- The views of parents
- The views of school staff; Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, Learning Mentors
- Consideration of the practice in feeder schools to ensure consistency of approach
- Consideration of successful practice in neighbouring schools.

2. The prime focus of all interventions purporting to be for the benefit of the individual student should be therapeutic rather than punitive. There

should be absolute clarity of distinction between strategies designed to manage immediate behaviour issues in the school, which are for the benefit of the school unit, and those strategies designed for the benefit of the individual students, helping them towards more functional behaviours, emotions and cognitive systems. If this raises professional development issues for staff or governors who demand a more punitive model it will be the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that such issues are adequately and successfully covered in the school's INSET programme or other training opportunities. Support in this work can be obtained from the various LEA agencies that will be able to provide evidence-based research to support this approach.

3. Staff with the main responsibility for the management of pupils in the behavioural system should be appropriately trained in a range of behavioural techniques and therapeutic approaches including anger management and conflict resolution. Frequently these are the most challenging and vulnerable pupils in the school and this should be reflected in the training, experience and skills of the staff.

4. Interventions should be reflective and interactive. Students should be active participants in their behavioural and emotional support plans, reflecting on their current situation and actively acquiring new insights and perspectives. They should have their emotional literacy developed and their range of coping strategies enlarged. Put simply all students should be active participants in reaching a common consensus about

what events happened, how they were interpreted by the various actors and what links there are between the events and their consequences.

5. Staff should understand the great need for an 'honourable way back' for pupils who have probably acquired an image of themselves and gained their identity through disruptive or dysfunctional behaviour for some considerable portion of their lives. To change their attitudes now might well involve them having to accept that they have made 'wrong' choices in the past. Such a challenge to their self-image would not be easy for anyone and is often a strong incentive for individuals to continue with dysfunctional behaviours. Learning to support pupils through this should be part of basic staff training.

6. Wherever possible the pupil's whole social community should be involved in their support. This will involve

   - productive relationships with the pupil's home carers, often a fairly difficult thing to achieve in behaviour management
   - well-established techniques such as the use of 'Buddies' (Smith, 2002), Circle Time and Circle Of Friends (Taylor, 1996) should give opportunities for pupils to be supported by their peers
   - expert behavioural staff should advise and support the mainstream staff who receive and teach the pupils returning to class from the Behavioural Units.

7. Support should be on an 'out-reach' basis rather than in a segregated unit as far as possible. This could involve a short period of withdrawal followed by a supported integration period. The pupil needs to be able to operate successfully in the lively and often chaotic classroom situation with mainstream staff as well as in the smaller environment of a Behavioural Unit.

8. Many pupils end up in a Behavioural Unit after a minor misdemeanour escalates. All staff should receive simple training in conflict resolution and techniques for avoiding conflicts in the first place.

9. Data on the use of the behavioural system should be kept rigorously and interrogated with a view to informing improved interventions. Even a cursory view of the data gathered at the subject school has shown family patterns to referrals (two siblings who had never been in trouble before were referred to the Behavioural Unit for violent behaviour within the same week) and very strong staff patterns. Rigorous questions should be asked about why some staff appear to teach certain pupils without difficulty while others have repeated cause to refer those pupils to the Behavioural Unit.

12.8 Teaching And Learning Implications: Differentiated Curricula

Chapter 11.6, The Management of Learning Issues, discusses the link between self-esteem, theories on personal ability and learning progress. The pupil whose educational support allows them to make 'satisfactory' progress is only likely to become an active learner, to maximise their potential and to acquire learning skills and approaches which will benefit them throughout their life once they have adopted an incremental theory to their ability and thus become more of a self-motivated learner. It is therefore strongly recommended that learning programmes, while starting from the 'easy success and much praise' model should, from the start, incorporate opportunities for the pupils to get involved with and to experience problem solving approaches which stretch their abilities and challenge their skills. Hand-in-hand with any advances in growing confidence and academic self-esteem should be a gradual move towards the encouragement of the more empowering incremental theory.

Pupils can be helped to become more autonomous and pro-active in their educational progress. Until they see education as in their own interests, consider that they have a stake in directing it and believe that their abilities are not a fixed and finite resource, their engagement is always likely to be limited. Some pupils, particularly those with strongly externalised loci of control, will need more explicit and overt assistance towards this than others will.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) places a much greater emphasis on pupil participation in their own learning plans and on encouraging active learning than did the previous Code of Practice (DfE 1994). Pupils with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) should be involved in regular discussions about their progress, their targets and the strategies and approaches to be used to meet those targets. These discussions provide the ideal vehicle for encouraging pupils towards a more empowered and incremental view of their abilities and learning potential. The opportunity should be taken to discuss with pupils how their skill and ability base has developed through taking chances, through trial and error exercises and through extended practice. This might be most obvious to the pupil in non-academic areas such as football or swimming where they can see in a non-threatening way in which repeatedly stretching their skills has extended them. Pupils' assumptions about their limitations should be explicitly but sensitively challenged. The way into such work will vary from pupil to pupil and IEPs will need to be highly individually tailored.

Only a minority of pupils will have IEPs and since the initial data gathering stage of this research new regulations mean that the number so supported will now be even smaller. As seen earlier in this work (see Chapters 9.3 and 10.3-10.4) even under the previous Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) there was a considerable mismatch between pupils identified as having emotional needs to support and those who would actually benefit from such support. Good practice, supported by the findings

of this research, would dictate that all pupils should be actively empowered and involved in shaping their own educational plans.

It is recommended that schools as a whole, and individual teachers at classroom level, should adopt a dynamic and interactive model of teaching. Such an approach should encourage learners to recognise and appreciate the medium and long-term purposes of education and the implications for their lives. Pupils should be instrumental in making pro-active choices about their educational profile and should be key active participants in the planning of their programme including setting short-term targets, devising strategies to reach those targets, monitoring progress but above all to be proactive in discussing the overall desired outcome.

12.9 The Learning Environment

Chapter 2.4 of this research explored some of the conflicting messages and pressures that a young person has to absorb into their understanding of the word and their place in it. Hypothesis 3 illustrated how powerless many of the vulnerable adolescents felt in the face of the demands life made upon them. In order to reduce the social dissonance experienced by some pupils at the transition from primary to secondary education it is recommended that some consideration be given to the learning environment that they enter; both physical and organisational. The ideal environment will be one where pupils feel safe, comfortable and valued. The ethos should be such that even the most vulnerable pupil should feel that it is safe to make mistakes. The following points are offered as likely to contribute to the creation of such an environment:

- Physical organisation that reduces the size of the area the pupil has to operate within. This might involve a class-based approach to most lessons and play, socialising and lunch-time areas designated for use by only designated years or designated entry points to the school and stair cases. Class-based lessons have the added advantage of allowing for meaningful use of the display areas and equipment provision. This in turn facilitates meaningful differentiation of teaching style and learning opportunities.

- Limited class sizes and change of class members, thus reducing the number of other pupils each pupil has to interact with. Where some degree of streaming is considered essential this should be balanced against the need for pupils to forge stable working and social relationships.

- A limited range of teaching staff with the clear identification of one class teacher who will teach several subjects and act as a pastoral support to a class.

- Lunch-time arrangements that allow for these valuable times to be used to the full to develop the social, emotional and behavioural curriculum of the school through 'family serving' eating arrangements, high staff involvement and the running of a full range of activities including the facilitating of playground activities. 'Family serving' is the phrase used in schools to describe the arrangement whereby pupils sit around a table to eat a meal all at the same time, often served at the table and with members of staff at some tables. This arrangement is in contrast to the 'cafeteria style' where pupils buy their food at a counter and come and go from the dining hall individually. Frequently the reality for schools with a cafeteria service is that pupils eat in corridors or cloakrooms.

- An approach to display and decoration that emphasises the pupils' ownership and identification with the environment and that reflects the value the pupil is given. This should include carpeted areas, cloakrooms

and either personal lockers, trays or desks, well appointed and maintained lavatories, provision for social interaction (seating on corridor alcoves or near cloakrooms), water fountains and lively and meaningful displays. Pupils should be involved in the planning and production of this.

- Social/pastoral provision that emphasises the value of the pupils' well-being such as break time fruit sales, magazines in social areas, supervised access to computers for social use.

- Strategies to address domestic or social deficits in the pupils' lives such as breakfast clubs, homework clubs, parents' clubs, outgrown uniform swap clubs etc. Designated rooms and times for drop-in access to school nurses, social workers or welfare officers etc. might be considered.

12.10 A Recognition Of Limitations

Chapter 12.1 sets out the recognition that in producing a piece of academic research conclusions and recommendations will be reached that might appear unrealistic in the prevailing economic and political circumstances. This section outlines briefly some considerations that might be raised as limitations on the implementation of the preceding recommendations. It is beyond the scope of this work to attempt to cover all such limitations or to explore those that are covered in great depth. Educational professionals in the field will be best placed to recognise such limitations as are pertinent to their peculiar circumstances and to consider how, whether and to what extent, such limitations can be overcome.

1. The staffing levels necessary to implement all of the above recommendations, both teaching and non-teaching staff, are unlikely to be achieved for the inter-linked reasons of cost and availability of suitable personnel.

   Many schools carry permanent teacher shortages and function with a permanent core of supply and agency staff. When the Learning Mentor scheme was introduced many schools found their own LSAs applied, particularly the more capable, thus filling the Learning Mentor posts but leaving vacancies among the LSAs.

2. As discussed earlier in this work (Chapter 10.4) schools frequently feel that they have more, and more varying, initiatives to absorb into their management than they can cope with. The importance of the issues discussed in this work might well take second place to the urgency of other matters.

3. Past experience of implementing similar initiatives suggests that there might well be some objections from the teaching staff on a number of points:

   - Staff might see the extension of their role from purely academic responsibilities to one encompassing social and emotional care as beyond their job description and what they are prepared to accept. Tolerating and addressing behavioural issues beyond the minimum necessary for the efficient management of the normal classroom is often a contentious issue in schools. On occasions teaching unions have supported staff in this view. To obtain the cultural change necessary a huge government and LEA backed in-service training programme and changes to the initial job description and contract would have to be considered.

   - Ensuring that Key Stage 3 pupils experience a smaller number of different teachers will have implications for staff timetables. Many high calibre subject teachers gain satisfaction from A Level teaching

and would resent a timetable too heavily weighted in favour of K.S.3 work.

As with the previous point this could be overcome if such an approach was an integral part of recruitment and in-service training policies.

4. Class bases for Key Stage 3 require more teacher movement to offset the reduced student movement. This will impact on the management of between lesson discipline, particularly in larger or split site schools. The effect of this would be reduced by the greater use of class rather than subject teachers but National Curriculum demands are such that a certain degree of teacher movement between lessons is likely to remain inevitable.

5. A well-managed Key Stage 3 area, as recommended in this work, could develop into a calm and supportive oasis of security for the pupils. It is also possible that such a provision could lead to feelings of isolation and segregation for the pupils and also for the staff. Careful and sensitive consideration would need to be given to this issue.

6. Many of the suggestions for the decoration and furbishment of the building would stretch the current finances available for this work to beyond their limit.

POST SCRIPT

This research set out to explore ways of identifying vulnerable adolescents at a time when they are struggling to establish themselves in the secondary, and for many the final, stages of their education and at a crucial time in their journey from childhood to adulthood. After investigating some of the previously suspected and subsequently proven inadequacies of the existing system it was intended that this research would identify evidence-based and practical interventions. These interventions would be aimed at easing the lives for such adolescents at this critical time and leading to more favourable outcomes for them than might otherwise be the case.

Additionally it was hoped that this research would contribute to the politico-academic debate surrounding the responsibilities of those supporting young people through those critical years. It was hoped that this would be taken up and extended by others. The extent to which this is the case can only be shown in future years.

Although it is beyond the scope of this research, at this stage, to add to the conclusions and recommendations with more longitudinal evidence, this research was completed nearly four years after the initial data gathering stage began. The cohort of pupils who formed the subjects of this research had moved from Year 7 to Year 11. The researcher's professional involvement with the subject school and the community it served continued throughout that time. Many of the deleterious predictions made for the

young people identified as vulnerable through this work have come about, some with tragic results. Unfortunately little inroad appears to have been made into turning the behavioural policy of the subject school from a punitive model based on discipline to a more preventative and therapeutic model, but the work continues.

On a more optimistic note many of the recommendations made in this thesis have been put into place, both in the subject school and in other parts of the subject LEA, partly as a result of this research and the professional involvement of the researcher with the subject school and wider LEA services and partly because they were ideas whose time had come. Although the subject school does not now operate a mass screening for vulnerability the transitional programme now in place is greatly changed and widely acknowledged to be much improved. There is still a long way to go with inclusion, collaboration with parents, the active participation of students, and multi-agency working, but these are all areas where great strides forward have been made. They are vastly better developed than they were four years ago and the signs suggest that this development is continuing. This is to the clear and obvious benefit of the students and the wider school community.

Perhaps, as is so frequently said of students, small steps in the right direction are still steps in the right direction and should be celebrated as progress. Today is better than yesterday and with the goodwill and commitment of all tomorrow looks likely to be better than today.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Final Survey Questionnaire Pack

Dear Teacher

Your class has been chosen to form part of the sample for a research project on adolescents and their approaches to life. I would greatly appreciate your support to ensure as good a response as possible. Please would you:

1. Ensure that the atmosphere is conducive to the pupils taking this seriously. You are the best person to judge whether to read through the whole pack to the class, just the pupil covering sheet or some other approach. Ensure that pupils work alone.

2. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and no time limit. Pupils should try to work fairly quickly – first thoughts are usually best.

3. The task is not timed but should take less than 30 minutes plus the time you take to explain it to the class. It would probably be advisable to have some other work to hand for those who finish early so that they don't distract the slower workers.

4. Please ask the pupils to be as honest as possible. Although I ask for their names their answers will be treated with respect and their confidences respected.

5. If you have any observations to make about this work – how the pupils responded or comments on the questionnaire or whatever I would appreciate them. Please enclose them on a sheet of paper along with the completed questionnaires.

Thank you very much for your assistance. It is extremely useful to me and to this research project and is truly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Helen Kendall (Educational Psychologist)

Date: January 2001
Name: ____________________
Sex: Male ___ Female ___

Dear Year 7 Pupil

You have just been given three questionnaires to complete. Please work through them fairly quickly and be as honest as possible. No-one but me will know what you have put – and I don't know you!

Thank you.

Helen Kendall
Educational Psychologist

Locus of Control ____

Self-Esteem G___, S___, A___, P___, L___, Total – lie ___

Coping Strategies _____

Coping Strategies _____

Name____________________________

ADOLESCENT COPING SCALE

INSTRUCTIONS

Students have a number of concerns or worries about things such as work, family, friends, the world and the like. Below is a list of ways in which people of your age cope with a wide variety of concerns or problems. Please indicate by circling the appropriate number, the things you do to deal with your concerns or worries. Work down the page and circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 as you come to each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which best describes how you feel.

For example if you sometimes cope with your concern by 'Talk to Others to see what they would do if they had the problem you would circle 3 as shows below:

		Doesn't apply or don't use	Used very little	Used some-times	Used often	Used a great deal
1	Talk to others to see what they would do if they had the problem	1	2	(3)	4	5

		Doesn't apply or don't use	Used very little	Used some-times	Used often	Used a great deal
1	Talk to other people about my concern to help me sort it out.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Work at solving the problem to the best of my ability.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Work hard.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Worry about what will happen to me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Spend more time with boy/girl friend.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Improve my relationship with others.	1	2	3	4	5

		Doesn't apply or don't	Used very little	Used some-times	Used often	Used a great deal
7	Wish a miracle would happen	1	2	3	4	5
8	I have no way of dealing with the situation	1	2	3	4	5
9	Find a way to let off steam; for example cry, scream, drink, take drugs etc.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Join with people who have the same concern.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Shut myself off from the problem so that I can avoid it	1	2	3	4	5
12	See myself as being at fault.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Don't let others know how I am feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Pray for help and guidance so that everything will be alright.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Look on the bright side of things and think of all that is good	1	2	3	4	5
16	Ask a professional person for help	1	2	3	4	5
17	Make time for leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5
18	Keep fit and healthy	1	2	3	4	5

19 List any other things you do to cope with your concern/s.

____

____

____

____

Name ________________

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Instructions.

On this page you will find a series of questions. Answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each one by putting a tick on the appropriate line.

		Yes	No
1.	Do you believe that most problems will just solve themselves if you just leave them alone?	___	___
2.	Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold?	___	___
3.	Are some children just born lucky?	___	___
4.	Most of the time do you feel that scoring good marks means a great deal to you?	___	___
5.	Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault?	___	___
6.	Do you believe that if someone studies hard enough she/he can pass any subject?	___	___
7.	Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway?	___	___
8.	Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning it's going to be a good day no matter what you do?	___	___
9.	Do you think that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say?	___	___
10.	Do you believe that wishing can make things happen?	___	___

		Yes	No
11.	When you get punished does it usually seem it's for no good reason at all?	___	___
12.	Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's opinion (mind)?	___	___
13.	Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win?	___	___
14.	Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parents' mind about anything?	___	___
15.	Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions?	___	___
16.	Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?	___	___
17.	Do you believe that most children are just born good at sport?	___	___
18.	Are most of the other children of your age stronger than you are?	___	___
19.	Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them?	___	___
20.	Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are?	___	___
21.	If you find a four leaf clover do you believe that it might bring you good luck?	___	___
22.	Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of marks you get?	___	___

		Yes	No
23.	Do you feel that when a child of your age decides to hit you there's little you can do to stop him/her?	___	___
24.	Have you ever had a good luck charm?	___	___
25.	Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you act?	___	___
26.	Will your parents usually help you if you ask them to?	___	___
27.	Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all?	___	___
28.	Most of the time do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today?	___	___
29.	Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?	___	___
30.	Do you think that children can get their own way if they just keep trying?	___	___
31.	Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home?	___	___
32.	Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work?	___	___
33.	Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters?	___	___
34.	Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to do?	___	___

		Yes	No
35.	Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home?	___	___
36.	Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it?	___	___
37.	Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just more intelligent than you are?	___	___
38.	Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?	___	___
39.	Most of the time do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do?	___	___
40.	Do you think that it's better to be clever than to be lucky?	___	___

Name____________________

SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS:

On this page you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel put a cross (X) in the column 'YES'. If the statement does not describe how you usually feel put a cross in the column 'NO'. There are no right or wrong answers. Please mark every statement.

	YES	NO
1. I wish I were younger	____	____
2. Boys and girls like to play with me	____	____
3. I usually give up when my school work is too hard.	____	____
4. My parents never get angry with me.	____	____
5. I only have a few friends.	____	____
6. I have lots of fun with my parents.	____	____
7. I like being a boy/girl	____	____
8. I am a failure at school.	____	____
9. My parents make me feel that I am not good enough.	____	____
10. I usually fail when I try to do important things.	____	____
11. I am happy most of the time.	____	____
12. I have never taken anything that did not belong to me.	____	____

	YES	NO
13. I often feel ashamed of myself.	____	____
14. Most boys and girls play games better than I do.	____	____
15. I often feel that I am no good at all.	____	____
16. Most boys and girls are smarter than I am.	____	____
17. My parents dislike me because I am not good enough.	____	____
18. I like everyone I know.	____	____
19. I am as happy as most boys and girls.	____	____
20. Most boys and girls are better than I am.	____	____
21. I like to play with children younger than I am.	____	____
22. I often feel like giving up school.	____	____
23. I can do things as well as other boys and girls.	____	____
24. I would change many things about myself if I could.	____	____
25. There are many times when I would like to run away from home.	____	____
26. I never worry about anything.	____	____
27. I always tell the truth.	____	____
28. My teacher feels that I am not good enough.	____	____
29. My parents think that I am a failure.	____	____
30. I worry a lot.	____	____

Appendix 2 – Semi-Structured Interview Pack

Semi-Structured Pupil Interview.

Thank pupil for participating and set the parameters – data gathered will be treated as confidential and used in a non-assignable manner. Participation is voluntary and the interview can be brought to an end at any time. Moderate the vocabulary used to suit the interviewee.

Name .... **Sex** ....

Home And Family.

- Tell me a little bit about your home and family. Who do you live with? (ages, relationship [blood relatives, Local Authority grouping], educational history, work etc.)

....

....

....

- Have you always lived with this same combination of people?

....

....

- Are there other people you would consider members of your family who do not live in the same building?

....

....

- Who do you get on with best out of your family? Why?

....

....

- What kind of building do you live in: flat, terraced house, semi-detached, detached/owned by family, council, privately rented/how many bedrooms?

....

- How long do you expect to live in your present home? At what age do you expect to leave?

....

- When you leave home where do you think you will live?

....
....

- Do you consider yourself happy at home? - expand

....
....
....
....

- Are you aware of any members of your family who have medical problems that affect the quality of their lives, have to visit the doctor or hospital regularly or are taking any medicines?

....
....
....

- Are you aware of any members of your family who have had help from doctors, counsellors or other professionals for difficulties to do with their happiness or problems in their lives to do with the way they feel or view the world?

....
....
....

- Do you know of any member of your family that has ever tried to take their own life?

....
....

- Do you think any of your family drink a lot of alcohol – have you ever seen them drunk?

....
....

- Do you think that any of your family uses other drugs?

....
....

- Has any member of your family ever been involved with the police?

....
....
....

- Do you think that you are well behaved at home and would your parents agree?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

- What sort of trouble do you get into?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

- How do your parents/carers respond when you misbehave? (physical or verbal correction/punishment, grounding, sent to room, pocket money deductions etc.)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

School

- Do you like school? Are you happy at school? (what do you like best/least – teachers, other pupils, subjects, unstructured time, etc.)

....
....
....

- If 5 is the most able worker and 1 is the pupil who struggles the most with their work where would you be?

1______2______3______4______5

- Do you think you are well behaved, averagely behaved or badly behaved? – expand

....
....
....
....

- Do you think that your teachers consider you to be well behaved, averagely behaved or badly behaved? (expand – exclusions, detentions, home-school report, being reprimanded etc.)

....
....
....
....

Social

- Tell me about your friends. Do you have any? Do you have as many as you would like to have? How many do you have? Are they at this school?

....
....
....

- Name one/two friends? When did you last associate with them? How long have they been your friends? Do you see them out of school? Have you ever been to their house? Have they ever been to your house? Do you expect to be friends with them next term/year/in 10 years time?

....
....
....
....

- What sort of thing do you do in your non-school time? (structured/non-structured activities, solitary/group activities, active, passive)

....
....
....

- Are there any sports, activities or occupations you would like to take up or plan to take up when you are older?

....
....
....

Personal Expectations And Ambitions

- What do you see yourself as doing/being in 10 years time (relationship status, parent status, working, living arrangements, geographical location etc.)

....
....
....
....
.

- What would you *like* to be doing?

....
....
....

- How do you expect to support yourself when you leave school?

....
....
....

- If the good fairy was to offer to change 3 things about you what would they be and why?

....
....
....

Dear (Head of Year),

This questionnaire is part of a large survey of adolescent self-esteem and coping strategies which I am conducting in my capacity as educational psychologist with Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx and under the supervision of Hull University. I would be extremely grateful for your co-operation in making this research as comprehensive as possible. Please spend a few minutes to answer these questions on the identified pupils.

Although I would like the names of pupils to identify them at this stage all responses will be treated in the utmost confidentiality. Once the data has been collated and matched with the data from other sources the results will be recorded and reported in entirely non-attributable forms. Individual pupils, teachers or schools will not be identifiable.

My most sincere thanks for your trouble. If you have any queries please contact me through your school office or on the number below. Please return the completed set of forms in the attached envelope as soon as possible.

Helen Kendall
(Educational Psychologist, tel. 0xxxx xxxxxx)

1. Pupil name ....

2. Is this pupil on the Special Needs register?

No: ☐

Yes: ☐ Stage 1: ☐ Stage 2: ☐ Stage 3: ☐ Stage 4: ☐

Stage 5: ☐

Learning Difficulties: ☐

Developmental Difficulties: ☐

Language Difficulties: ☐

Sensory Difficulties: ☐

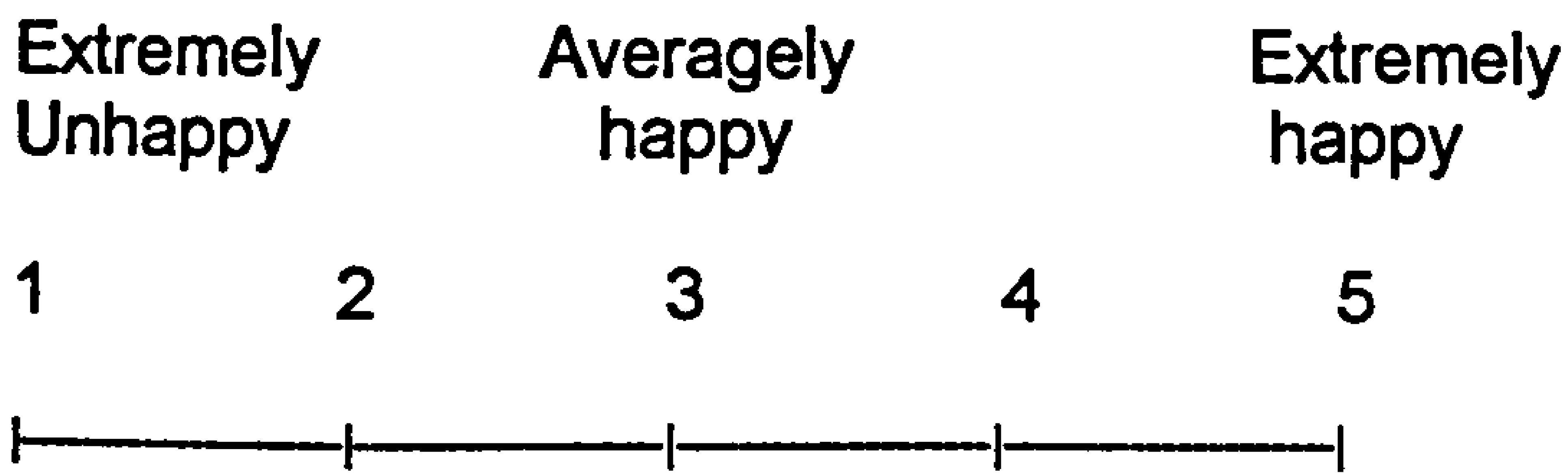
Physical Difficulties: ☐

Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties: ☐

Other

....

3. Would you describe this pupil as 'happy'?



4. Circle as many of the following adjectives as you think apply to this pupil:

Popular, well integrated, isolated, disaffected, self-sufficient, lonely, friendly, quiet, studious, gregarious, attention seeking, socially awkward

5. Are you aware of any factors in this pupil's life which might have an impact on their educational, emotional, behavioural or social performance?

....
....
....
....
....
....

6. If you could predict the future for this child briefly describe where they might be in 15 years time on each of the following:

a) Employment

....

b) Educational achievements

....

c) Family life (married or co-habiting in a stable relationship, living alone, living with parents etc.)

....

d) Psychoactive substance use (alcohol or other drugs)

....

e) Criminal activity

....

f) other issues

....
....
....
....
....

Appendix 3 – Data Summary : Raw Scores

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
1	1	16	63	75	44	15	0
2	2	14	48	45	48	18	0
3	2	19	42	25	38	20	0
4	1	21	60	55	58	12	0
5	2	14	66	60	56	22	0
6	2	25	75	60	66	7	0
7	1	18	72	55	42	17	0
8	1	18	63	75	50	20	0
9	2	25	66	60	36	15	0
10	1	20	60	35	56	11	0
11	1	18	63	70	46	20	0
12	2	15	75	65	68	19	0
13	2	21	48	55	34	23	0
14	2	21	81	70	48	19	0
15	2	24	78	65	48	13	0
16	2	11	66	45	60	21	1
17	1	20	78	65	50	12	0
18	2	20	75	70	64	21	0
19	1	14	60	30	48	22	0
20	1	20	72	60	60	13	0
21	2	17	54	50	34	27	0
22	2	11	60	55	68	25	1
23	2	21	63	35	56	17	0
24	2	20	36	45	44	11	0
25	1	18	69	50	58	19	0
26	1	21	78	55	46	13	0
27	2	22	54	40	42	18	0
28	2	11	78	80	58	16	1
29	1	18	72	55	48	9	0
30	1	17	48	50	50	18	0
31	2	21	60	45	58	11	0
32	1	12	54	25	36	18	1
33	1	12	72	60	52	16	1
34	1	11	45	55	66	22	1
35	1	17	69	70	54	20	0
36	2	16	54	60	60	19	0
37	2	25	81	60	50	18	0
38	1	22	66	55	44	12	0
39	1	22	75	75	58	26	0
40	2	15	90	55	76	20	0
41	1	22	69	55	44	14	0
42	1	20	66	20	58	25	0
43	2	21	72	40	54	14	0

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
44	1	15	60	60	60	14	0
45	1	19	27	25	34	23	0
46	1	19	36	15	16	15	0
47	2	21	57	45	46	12	0
48	2	19	69	45	56	15	0
49	2	9	72	65	52	17	1
50	2	23	69	45	46	6	0
51	2	23	75	40	46	13	0
52	1	22	78	40	40	12	0
53	1	19	72	90	66	15	0
54	1	24	75	65	48	13	0
55	2	25	78	65	48	16	0
56	2	21	66	65	46	16	0
57	2	16	63	60	56	22	0
58	1	21	81	35	64	12	0
59	1	24	69	35	72	16	0
60	1	9	72	60	58	19	1
61	1	13	72	40	68	20	1
62	1	21	72	40	50	14	0
63	2	17	87	80	62	18	0
64	2	23	72	65	36	20	0
65	1	9	87	70	60	17	1
66	1	17	72	55	58	17	0
67	1	17	54	40	70	15	0
68	2	10	60	80	70	24	1
69	1	20	63	60	28	12	0
70	2	17	63	40	56	16	0
71	2	19	63	55	66	20	0
72	1	20	90	100	56	14	0
73	1	10	57	70	44	18	1
74	2	24	78	50	56	21	0
75	2	20	48	35	50	23	0
76	2	19	69	40	44	17	0
77	2	20	51	50	60	20	0
79	1	22	.	.	.	6	0
80	2	14	69	80	66	23	0
81	1	11	63	25	78	19	1
82	1	20	66	45	60	15	0
83	2	20	69	55	46	15	0
84	2	23	63	50	34	15	0
85	2	10	63	40	64	22	1
86	1	17	60	40	56	11	0
87	1	19	63	70	66	13	0
88	2	16	75	85	56	28	0
89	2	23	81	45	50	13	0
90	1	21	66	35	48	18	0

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
91	2	9	72	95	66	17	1
93	1	7	42	40	42	29	1
97	2	20	87	65	42	22	0
98	1	11	57	55	56	21	1
99	2	23	84	70	34	23	0
100	1	20	90	90	68	17	0
101	1	15	63	50	64	21	0
102	1	18	60	50	50	17	0
103	2	16	.	.	.	21	0
104	1	12	78	70	70	23	1
105	2	10	87	70	62	20	1
106	2	14	57	45	56	23	0
107	1	20	69	35	54	18	0
108	1	24	69	30	30	13	0
109	1	16	48	30	58	20	0
110	1	21	72	45	36	11	0
111	2	22	72	45	50	14	0
112	2	25	69	45	38	11	0
113	2	21	69	55	42	16	0
114	1	19	69	50	52	18	0
115	2	15	51	20	54	11	0
116	2	22	57	35	34	15	0
117	2	23	87	70	32	10	0
118	1	13	72	45	48	18	1
119	1	19	84	45	62	18	0
120	1	18	72	65	64	13	0
121	1	23	69	65	62	11	0
122	1	9	48	70	38	19	1
123	2	23	69	45	48	12	0
124	2	24	60	40	36	10	0
125	1	18	60	65	44	14	0
126	1	13	75	90	70	16	1
127	1	20	57	25	36	17	0
128	2	23	81	60	62	16	0
129	2	24	78	65	54	17	0
130	1	18	60	30	66	21	0
131	1	16	66	80	42	18	0
132	1	10	57	45	54	23	1
133	2	21	60	65	52	13	0
134	1	22	78	55	56	12	0
135	2	25	63	45	44	14	0
136	2	25	63	40	46	18	0
137	2	11	39	40	62	18	1
138	1	8	45	35	54	21	1
139	2	11	60	40	54	17	1
140	2	14	36	55	56	17	0

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
141	1	19	72	50	48	8	0
142	2	12	60	50	58	14	1
143	1	12	57	45	40	19	1
144	1	15	42	50	44	14	0
145	1	17	69	30	60	19	0
146	2	22	51	45	38	7	0
147	1	18	78	65	62	16	0
148	1	18	72	40	58	16	0
149	2	10	66	75	50	22	1
150	2	9	69	65	70	25	1
151	1	21	69	45	44	20	0
152	2	12	63	35	52	16	1
153	2	19	54	20	44	8	0
154	2	20	69	55	66	17	0
155	2	20	72	40	70	21	0
156	1	10	57	45	62	19	1
157	1	13	66	45	54	17	1
158	1	20	72	55	40	15	0
159	1	14	66	45	66	17	0
160	2	21	78	70	58	18	0
161	2	19	66	30	54	17	0
162	2	14	54	40	60	21	0
163	1	12	36	40	44	22	1
164	1	22	75	40	38	14	0
165	1	25	66	55	46	15	0
166	1	20	60	60	52	19	0
167	1	18	60	65	48	17	0
168	1	5	60	35	52	22	1
169	1	22	72	80	44	21	0
170	1	11	57	70	64	20	1
171	1	16	63	30	44	11	0
172	1	22	81	45	50	14	0
173	1	22	63	90	66	21	0
174	1	21	84	45	46	17	0
175	1	24	66	35	28	8	0
176	1	10	75	55	46	18	1
177	1	22	84	50	50	15	0
179	2	23	66	30	28	10	0
180	1	16	78	45	54	18	0
181	1	18	39	20	28	15	0
182	2	22	81	70	74	17	0
183	2	12	66	70	68	21	1
184	2	19	72	65	50	15	0
185	2	16	66	70	62	18	0
186	2	14	66	60	70	15	0
187	2	15	51	35	40	14	0

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
188	1	5	72	65	58	27	1
189	1	8	66	35	56	20	1
190	1	16	60	45	34	22	0
191	1	13	60	45	34	18	1
192	1	17	69	55	54	14	0
193	1	19	69	40	52	15	0
194	2	21	75	45	60	19	0
195	2	25	69	35	40	12	0
196	2	23	75	50	62	15	0
197	2	13	72	65	60	14	1
198	2	21	72	70	58	14	0
199	2	9	75	60	64	25	1
200	2	20	72	60	60	16	0
202	2	17	63	85	46	12	0
203	2	19	72	65	56	21	0
204	2	14	69	55	64	25	0
205	1	22	72	80	40	6	0
206	1	23	75	55	46	12	0
207	1	19	72	40	58	17	0
208	1	23	27	15	20	18	0
209	1	16	69	65	58	17	0
210	1	19	84	35	46	19	0
211	2	22	63	55	52	18	0
212	1	19	63	55	58	16	0
213	2	18	72	60	72	22	0
214	1	19	69	55	52	16	0
215	1	14	63	60	74	21	0
216	1	24	81	40	46	8	0
217	1	22	66	65	58	11	0
218	1	23	69	30	52	11	0
219	2	19	57	35	48	14	0
220	2	25	75	45	40	13	0
221	1	25	87	40	36	3	0
222	2	9	84	50	60	20	1
223	1	12	75	60	72	28	1
225	2	15	60	55	58	28	0
226	1	13	60	25	48	16	1
227	2	14	63	50	60	18	0
228	1	23	87	45	52	18	0
229	1	25	81	35	36	15	0
230	1	25	72	50	40	16	0
231	2	19	75	50	64	19	0
232	2	12	72	55	64	14	1
233	1	17	78	50	54	35	0
234	2	12	72	60	74	25	1
235	2	21	63	45	62	17	0

Script	Gender	Overall Self-Esteem	Prod Coping	Reference Coping	Non-prod Coping	LOC	Vulnerable
236	1	19	57	25	48	19	0
237	1	17	48	40	64	16	0
238	2	5	57	65	68	16	1

Appendix 4 – Data Summary : Chi-Squared Test Scores

Factors Tested	χ^2	p score	df	significance
Overall Self Esteem by Gender	3.14	0.5346	4	n/a
General Self Esteem by Gender	4.97	0.2905	4	n/a
General Self Esteem by Locus of Control	60.70	9.8440E-10	9	99.9%
General Self Esteem by Productive Coping	21.69	9.9012E-03	9	95.0%
General Self Esteem by Reference Coping	8.91	0.4454	9	n/a
General Self Esteem by Non-productive Coping	40.12	6.8740E-05	12	99.9%
Social Self Esteem by Gender	0.42	0.8527	4	n/a
Social Self Esteem by Locus of Control	18.87	2.6291E-02	9	95.0%
Social Self Esteem by Productive coping	10.40	0.3194	9	n/a
Social Self Esteem by Reference Coping	9.85	0.3624	9	n/a
Social Self Esteem by Non-productive Coping	18.48	3.0027E-02	9	95.0%
Academic Self Esteem by Gender	4.15	0.0951	4	n/a
Academic Self Esteem by Locus of Control	25.78	2.2186E-03	9	99.5%
Academic Self Esteem by Productive coping	22.78	9.7301E-03	9	99.0%
Academic Self Esteem by Reference Coping	14.42	0.1515	9	n/a

Factors Tested	χ^2	p score	df	significance
Academic Self Esteem by Non-productive Coping	26.57	1.6471E-03	9	99.5%
Parental Self Esteem by Gender	0.81	0.7116	4	n/a
Parental Self Esteem by Locus of Control	20.01	0.0178	9	95.0%
Parental Self Esteem by Productive coping	17.30	0.0443	9	95.0%
Parental Self Esteem by Reference Coping	8.33	0.5010	9	n/a
Parental Self Esteem by Non-productive Coping	19.08	2.4487E-02	9	95.0%
LOC by Vulnerability	23.26	3.5717E-05	3	99.9%
LOC by Gender	5.09	0.0786	2	n/a
Male LOC by Vulnerability	24.39	2.0709E-05	3	99.9%
Female LOC by Vulnerability	6.05	0.1093	3	n/a
Productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	3.32	0.3452	3	n/a
Productive Coping Strategies by Gender	0.01	0.9996	3	n/a
Vulnerable Group Productive Coping Strategies by Gender	2.81	0.4214	3	n/a
Male Productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	5.83	0.1201	3	n/a
Female Productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	1.17	0.7614	3	n/a
Productive Coping Strategies by LOC	8.37	0.4976	9	n/a
Reference Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	2.53	0.4700	3	n/a

Factors Tested	χ^2	p score	df	significance
Reference Coping Strategies by Gender	6.21	0.1017	3	n/a
Vulnerable Group Reference Coping Strategies by Gender	4.01	0.2608	3	n/a
Male Reference Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	3.35	0.3408	3	n/a
Female Reference Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	5.93	0.1151	3	n/a
Reference Coping Strategies by LOC	6.93	0.6441	9	n/a
Non-productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	13.71	8.2918E-03	4	99.0%
Non-productive Coping Strategies by Gender	4.41	0.3532	4	n/a
Vulnerable Group Non-productive Coping Strategies by Gender	6.32	0.0972	3	n/a
Male Non-productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	4.69	0.3206	4	n/a
Female Non-productive Coping Strategies by Vulnerability	14.17	6.7829E-03	4	99.0%
Non-productive Coping Strategies by LOC	22.23	8.1679E-03	9	99.0%